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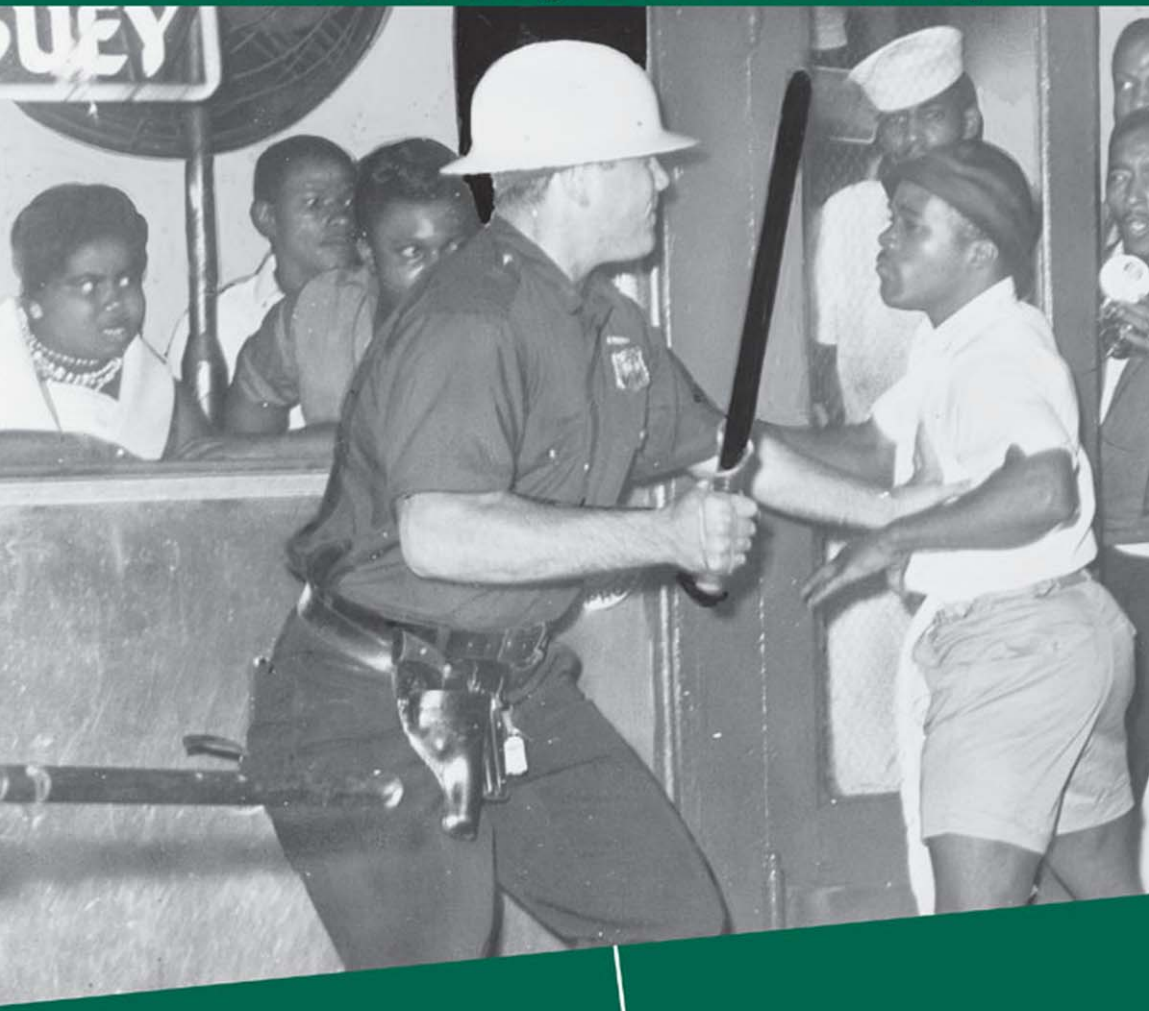

Mau Mau in Harlem?

The U.S. and the Liberation of Kenya

Gerald Horne

Mau Mau in Harlem?

Contemporary Black History

Manning Marable (Columbia University) and
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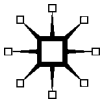

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Abbreviations

ACOA	American Committee on Africa
ADA	Americans for Democratic Action
AFL-CIO	American Federation of Labor and Congress of Industrial Organizations
AIM	Africa Inland Mission
BBC	British Broadcasting Corporation
BBC	*BBC Written Archives–Reading, UK*
BCINA	British Commonwealth International News Agency
BPP	Black Panther Party
BSCP	*Brotherhood of Sleeping Car Porters Papers*
CAA	Council on African Affairs
CAS	Capricorn African Society
CBS	Columbia Broadcasting System
CIA	U.S. Central Intelligence Agency
CIO	Congress of Industrial Organizations
COINTELPRO	Counter Intelligence Program
CORE	Congress of Racial Equality
CPSA	Communist Party of South Africa
CPUSA	Communist Party-USA
DDT	Dichloro-Diphenyl-Trichloroethane
EA	East African
FBI	U.S. Federal Bureau of Investigation
FFA	*Ford Foundation Archives–New York*
GIs	U.S. Army soldier/"government issue"
GOP	Grand Old Party/Republican Party
ICFTU	International Confederation of Free Trade Unions
JFK	John F. Kennedy
KANU	Kenya African National Union
KDKA	a radio station
KFL	Kenya Federation of Labour
KNA	*Kenya National Archives–Nairobi*
MGM	Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer
MHS	*Missouri Historical Society, St. Louis*
MR	(mission) Moral Rearmament movement
MRA	Moral Re-Armament Movement

NAACP	National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
NARA-CP	*National Archives and Records Administration–College Park, Maryland*
NARA-DC	*National Archives and Records Administration–Washington, DC*
NAUK	*National Archives–London, UK*
NBC	National Broadcasting Company (United States)
RCA	Radio Corporation of America
TR	Theodore Roosevelt
TUC	Trades Union Congress (United Kingdom)
TUC	*Papers Trades Unions Congress Papers–University of Warwick–UK*
TWA	Trans World Airlines
UAW	United Auto Workers
UAW	*Papers of UAW Washington Office, International Affairs, Victor Reuther and Lewis Carliner Papers–Wayne State University, Detroit*
UDI	Unilateral Declaration of Independence
UN	United Nations
UNIA	Universal Negro Improvement Association
UNRA	United Nations Relief and Rehabilitation Administration
USIS	U.S. Information Service
USSR	Soviet Union
WFTU	World Federation of Trade Unions
YMCA	Young Men's Christian Association

Introduction

William Baldwin was quite pleased.

This graduate of the University of Colorado–Boulder and former enlistee in the officer-training program of the U.S. Navy Air Corps had landed in Mombasa, Kenya in 1954 with—as he put it—"neither proper entry papers nor adequate funds." The fact that this East African colony of Great Britain was ensnared in a gory conflict had not deterred him—in fact, it helped to drive him to this bloody shore. For he quickly joined the Kenya Police though he was concerned about what impact this might have on his U.S. citizenship; he was elated to discover that this was of small concern to the U.S. Consulate—a reflection of the sympathy at the highest levels in Washington for the plight faced by a tiny band of European colonialists who had begun arriving in Kenya roughly a half-century earlier in a successful effort to construct a racist settler state. Thus, Baldwin simply took an "abbreviated oath of allegiance" to Queen Elizabeth, an indication of the firmness of the fabled Anglo-American tie. Subsequently, he joined the equivalent of "our U.S. National Guard" and it was this engagement that led to his pleasure.

For it was then that he slaughtered an escaping African woman prisoner he called "Wainja," then watched with evident delight as the throat of another was slit. "The throat opened in a wide red smile," he recalled later with contentment. "Blood shot forth from the severed arteries, spraying the executioners in a scarlet mist…"[1] This was not the sole murder in Kenya that had involved the macabre Baldwin. The twenty-seven-year-old Euro-American with a taut 165 pounds distributed on his muscular frame was a platoon leader who bragged that he had killed more than a "dozen native terrorists."[2] This bloodshed brought him no sleepless nights however, as the deceased, who he referred to as the Mau Mau,[3] were little more than "diseased animals."[4]

Baldwin was not the sole U.S. national to travel to Colonial Kenya for a few years after his gruesome encounters there an African American journalist, Louis Lomax, was to be found in the capital, Nairobi. Amidst the broad avenues and teeming streets of this metropolis blessed with a climate that many Europeans found congenial, he found himself in a government building, and as he described later, "my eyes fell upon the sign on a washroom door. I stopped, frozen in my tracks," as his eyes read the sign—"Men: European." Having been born in Valdosta, Georgia, in 1922, he was no stranger to racist segregation. So, he simply walked a couple of doors down the hall and there

was another washroom door but just as his muscles were about to shed their tenseness at the prospect of relief, he noticed the sign, "Men: Asian," an indicator of the sizeable population in Kenya that hailed from what had been British India. Approaching full panic mode, the flustered Lomax was now summoning a full head of steam and raced up and down the corridor looking for a door marked "Men: African." There was no such thing. "My God," he wailed: "Africans can't even go to the toilet!" Later he was to discover that Jim Crow reigned generally in the colony when it came to bodily functions as " 'European' toilets . . . [had] seats, whereas 'Asian' toilets are nothing more than a hole carved on the floor . . ."[5]

And Africans? The future diplomat, Ralph Bunche, discovered their plight when he was in Colonial Kenya in the late 1930s. There he found that Nairobi was "one big pissory [outdoor toilet] because there are practically no public facilities available for natives." Just after he noticed this "we drove up the street and saw a native park his bicycle and in plain view turn his back and relieve himself."[6] From the colonialist viewpoint, the failure to provide toilets for Africans had the added bonus of bolstering their presupposition about the alleged lack of "civilized" behavior of this overwhelming majority, which buttressed the desire to continue oppressing them. This presupposition was nothing new to African Americans, who were quite accustomed to being slotted forcibly into inferior niches—then castigated for being found in inferior niches.

Bunche, also an African American, was similarly struck by Kenya's variety of Jim Crow, which made many U.S. nationals feel at home. This apartheid-like system had been in place for some time and was virtually coterminous with the beginning of European colonialism decades before Lomax's arrival.[7]

But as World War II ended and the Cold War heated up, Washington found it difficult to portray itself as a paragon of human rights virtue as long as the ugly stain of Jim Crow continued to deface its escutcheon.[8] So, the United States, beginning in the 1950s began to move away haltingly from the more egregious aspects of racism and as the British Empire began its terminal decline, Washington also began to exert similar influence on London's colonial outposts—Kenya, not least. This pressure was accepted grudgingly—at best—by the European colonialists in Nairobi, just as it energized Africans and African Americans who, not for the first or last time, found their interests yoked. As black Americans surged toward equality, Washington's growing strategic interest in a segregated Kenya was complicated, particularly as this handed Moscow a propaganda victory. This led directly to Washington's courting of Kenyans—for example, the trade unionist, Tom Mboya. As it turned out, African Americans continued to take heart from the "Mau Mau" struggle and Kenya proved of more relevance to them than those U.S. leaders who had interest in East Africa over the years, beginning with Theodore Roosevelt.

Thus it was that in the Spring of 1960 after decamping from his unpleasant experience in Nairobi, Lomax found himself in Harlem—the self-proclaimed capital of Black America—as some 4,000 African Americans jammed the

intersection of 125th Street and Seventh Avenue for a rally to hear the controversial firebrand, then known as Malcolm X. Dressed as ever in an austere dark suit and skinny tie, the man who had helped to popularize a militant form of Islam among African Americans, was the focal point of this gathering that lasted over five hours. As Lomax busily scribbled notes, Malcolm—as was his wont-deployed the example of Kenya in order to urge his followers to confront white supremacy.[9]

Thus, in December 1964, a scant year after the overthrow of colonialism in Kenya, the bespectacled Muslim militant was speaking again in Harlem, this time to a smaller assemblage—but with a still pointed message. He spoke after "Freedom Singers" had performed, including a rendition of "Oginga Odinga of Kenya," melodic and harmonic homage to that nation's leading radical. As the icon of the Civil Rights Movement—Fannie Lou Hamer—accompanied him, Malcolm again deployed Kenya to propel his peroration. "In my opinion," he began, "not only in Mississippi and Alabama, but right here in New York City, you and I can best learn how to get real freedom by studying how [Jomo] Kenyatta brought it to his people in Kenya and how Odinga helped him, and the excellent job that was done by the Mau Mau. In Mississippi we need a Mau Mau. In Alabama we need a Mau Mau. In Georgia we need a Mau Mau. Right here in Harlem, New York City, we need a Mau Mau."[10]

* * *

This is a book about the relationship between Kenya and the United States in the context of the struggle against white supremacy in both nations and in the context of the struggle for national liberation in East Africa. Though it focuses heavily on the 1950s and 1960s, as both struggles were gaining traction, it also stretches back decades and extends a bit to the present. I suggest in these pages the mutuality of these two struggles, driven in part by a similar "black-white" dynamic that distinguished it from contemporaneous conflicts in Africa, just as the predominance of the English speaking distinguished this bilateral relationship from what was its closest cousin—apartheid South Africa.[11] As in the United States, Kenya too contained racially segregated neighborhoods,[12] schools,[13] cemeteries,[14] and the like, which made this African nation seem ideal to Washington—at least for a long while.

For eventually the grisly images emerging from the war in Kenya sent a frisson of apprehension coursing through Washington, as some worried nervously that the stark scenes of violence from Africa would soon grip the streets of the United States: "Mau Mau" came to be seen as bloody retribution for the centuries of slaving and colonialism that Europeans had visited upon Africans. Dixiecrats argued that the conflict in Kenya was a negative example demonstrating that Africans—"Americans" or not—were simply not ready for anything but third-class citizenship. Staunch colonialists were angry with Washington in turn, feeling abandoned in favor of a trendy desegregation. Many Londoners were hurt, feeling that Washington was much too eager to adapt to the much discussed "winds of change," to the detriment of the Empire. African Americans,

sympathizing not a whit with these calloused attitudes sensed that the struggle of Africans was their own—and vice versa.

This was occurring as television was becoming a veritable living room appliance—allowing for the transmission of hideous images of violence—and as movies too had begun to pay attention to an East African war that was thought to be of moment to the United States. Many thousands of Africans died from the commencing of the "State of Emergency" in the Fall of 1952 to independence in December 1963 and—contrary to popular perceptions—fewer than one hundred Europeans. This latter point is critical in that the perception was that many more had perished, which in the minds of many Euro-Americans gave rise to grave apprehensions about the aspirations for liberty held by African Americans, just as it convinced others that Jim Crow had to go—post-haste.[15]

The war in Kenya, in short, was—as Pan-African activist George Padmore put it—"the biggest colonial [conflict] in Africa since the Boer War."[16] Racists seeking desperately to hold on to power in the United States were heartened as virtually the entire Kikuyu ethnic group in Kenya was placed in what were termed (euphemistically) strategic hamlets and, as the scholar David Anderson put it, this nation "became a police state in the very fullest sense of that term."[17] Perhaps stern tactics on this side of the Atlantic—where Europeans were a majority—could stave off a disorderly retreat from Jim Crow. After all, by 1959 when the forces of liberation in Colonial Kenya seemed to be crushed, the ratio of "white" to "non-white" was 1–100—so, certainly the more numerous Dixiecrats could prevail decisively if their racial comrades across the Atlantic could.[18] Actually, even this skewed ratio might have been overblown: the desperate settlers—less than 7,000 of whom were involved in agriculture with a minute handful controlling 16,000 square miles or 24% of the land, while five million Africans had the less attractive land—chose to redefine "race." Egyptians and Palestinian Arabs were called Europeans, though Arabs from elsewhere were called Asian. Yet, when the Governor in 1955 brought a Jewish man to lunch, he was supposedly the first ever of his grouping to have been so invited. At that moment—after India had bolted from the Empire in 1947—about 80% of colonial subjects were Africans, with Kenya seen as critical to the destiny of colonialism.[19]

Unsurprisingly, from its earliest stages, Euro-Americans had drawn parallels between their arrival and subsequent subjugation of North America and that of their brethren in East Africa. This had occurred from the onset of the British incursion in East Africa in the late nineteenth century, though this thinking accelerated as challenges to Jim Crow grew. Early in 1953—just after the proclamation of the "State of Emergency" in Kenya—the novelist Robert Ruark, once wildly popular as a kind of down-market version of his hero, Ernest Hemingway, instructed the thousands of readers of *LIFE* magazine that the "scene in Kenya today seems remarkably similar to what we experienced in the U.S. during our colonization processes, when the sidearm was part of dress and women took rifles to the fields with them." Yes, he concluded grimly, "we killed most of our Sioux and Apache," but he concluded forlornly, "the difference today in Kenya is that it would be rather difficult, not to say unjust, to kill a million Kikuyu,"

especially since it would "cause…displeasure in the U.N. [General] Assembly and high glee in Russia…"[20]

For both Kenya and the United States were fruits of the same British tree of settler colonialism, though at times it seemed that the former had been engrafted from the latter. Aidan Hartley, a contemporary Kenyan, related to the British actress Vivian Leigh, was descended from David Hartley, a staunch opponent of the revolution in North America and a friend of Benjamin Franklin; he was also Britain's minister plenipotentiary and signed the Treaty of Paris in the Autumn of 1783.[21] The celebrated Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thiongo, may have had in mind the influx of Euro-Americans to his homeland when he contemptuously referred to the settlers as "parasites in paradise."[22]

Winston Churchill, a living embodiment of the fabled Anglo-American alliance, had journeyed to Kenya in 1908, not long after a settler class had begun to form and he was noticeably impressed with what he saw. "Nairobi," he enthused, was a "typical South Africa township. It might be Pietermaritzburg or Ladysmith of twenty years ago," though "it resembles Bulawayo most." He added rhapsodically, "In beauty, in fertility, in verdure, in the coolness of the air, in the abundance of running water, in its rich red soil, in the variety of its vegetation the scenery about Kenya far surpasses anything I have ever seen in India or South Africa, and challenges comparisons with the fairest countries of Europe."[23] Yet even the Tory that Churchill was had the perspicacity to express "genuine misgiving[s]" about the "compulsory labour" that underpinned the luxurious lifestyles of the settlers.[24]

The pleasantness of Kenya that the Tory leader had noticed was still in place in the 1960s when a U.S. national visited. "To an American who spent part of his youth in the West of his own country," said John Chamberlain, "it is disturbingly, almost enchantingly, familiar. Coming into Nairobi airport from the North and looking out and down from the plane, one might be flying over Wyoming at one moment, over Arizona the next. Mount Kenya and the Aberdare chain might be western mountains. Nairobi itself is like a California town in the sunshine—and one recalls that Anne Lindbergh said it was 'like Pasadena'…"[25] A Ford Foundation official was similarly enchanted during a visit near the same time. "My first impression of both the airport and the city of Nairobi," he said, "is that they are clean and neat, with traffic flowing in an orderly manner. Everywhere there are signs that a game park is not far away—pictures, gift shops, safari wagons, safari clothes on at least half the men, and giraffe and zebra grazing wild beside the road from the airport to the city." The air was "clean and dry," while the temperature was "warm, but not too hot for a city just below the equator but up to 5432 feet. There is always a breeze and the evenings are cool…" He was happy to report that "all fruits and vegetables (including leafy greens and tomatoes) may be eaten and the water need not be boiled." Thus, he stressed, Nairobi was "*very* pleasant." The "drugstores are also well stocked. Excellent medical, dental and hospital facilities are available"—which made Nairobi almost unique on a desperately poor continent. "Most of the incidents will be between African tribes or between Africans and Asians. The Kenya police are mostly from the Wakamba tribe," which "broke the Mau

Mau a few years ago." Thus, he concluded with relief, "I would have no hesitation to bring my family here."[26]

The value of this part of East Africa had been thought to be far from the historical concerns of African Americans but, as it turns out, this group has far more roots in this region than has been imagined.[27] Indeed, the great black Abolitionist, Martin Delaney, pointed out during his prime that, yes, "the Eastern Coast of Africa has long been neglected and never but little known, even to the ancients, but"—he added tellingly—"[it] has ever been our choice part of the continent," especially due to its strategic location, presenting the "greatest facilities for an immense trade with China, Japan, Siam, Hindoostan, in short, all the East Indies…"[28]

Not long after the much awaited emancipation from slavery to which Delaney had contributed so much, segregationist Senator John Morgan of Alabama, decided to implement his version of the great abolitionist's grand vision: he made sure that his nation was to become the first to recognize the legitimacy of the otherwise illegitimate Congo Free State—one of Kenya's key neighbors. As he and his comrades envisioned it, this would be the perfect dumping ground to deposit African Americans.[29]

Shortly thereafter, Theodore Roosevelt—whose journey to Kenya helped to propel this colony to the front ranks of his nation's consciousness of Africa—acknowledged that "a "Westerner, far better than an Easterner, could see the possibilities of the country," that is a "white man's country like this of the highlands of East Africa…" For fresh in the mind of a "Westerner" were still raging conflicts between indigenes and Europeans—not unlike what was bedeviling Kenya.[30] Speaking in London in 1910, the man who only recently had relinquished the White House and who just as recently had returned from Colonial Kenya, recalled fondly, "I met many settlers on intimate terms, and I felt for them a peculiar sympathy, because they so strikingly reminded me of the men of our western frontier of America."[31] Roosevelt was merely reflecting the unavoidable fact that there was an intimate closeness between the impulse toward imperialism and the impulse to cross new frontiers.

One of the men TR encountered in Colonial Kenya was a St. Louisan, who went on to be knighted—again illustrating the intimacy between the British Empire and its budding successor. Sir Northrup McMillan became one of the more affluent of the colonialists, controlling mining licenses[32] and lavishly residing in baronial splendor. He also became one of the colony's chief landowners: the ouster of Africans from the land was a primary cause of the liberation war and continues to unsettle Kenya.[33]

But it was not the Euro-American elite alone that had descended upon British East Africa. It was in 1925—just after an anticolonial revolt that had been thought to have been inspired by the ideas of Marcus Garvey—that the U.S. consul in Nairobi reported that the "Belgian Consul for East Africa…is obsessed with a conviction, which there is reason to believe has gained a measure of credence in Brussels and London, that communistic propaganda is very active among the Negroes of the Eastern Congo and the British East African dependencies and that the agents spreading the doctrine of unrest are, among others, American Negroes."[34] There was also the idea afoot that there was "Bolshevik agitation

of illiterate Negroes" in the region, spurred by a reputed Czech national, John Bukovnik; it was "believed," said U.S. consul, Avra Warren, "he will attempt to enter the United States to propagandize the illiterate American Negroes. He is said to be an associate of Billings and [Claude] Mackay [*sic*], noted Negro Communists."[35]

The busy port of Mombasa was a primary vector for the entry of presumed subversives. Moreover, Colonial Kenya was sited in a part of Africa that, in many ways, was the hub of the continent. It shared a border with Ethiopia, whose continuing independence had attracted the attention of more than one potential colonizer. Italy's invasion in the 1930s was a signpost on the road to a global war that was to transform colonialism itself; in the short term this conflict not only attracted refugees to Kenya with varying ideas,[36] it also energized a Pan-African crusade that was not to leave East Africa unaffected. As World War II accelerated, the U.S. consul in Mombasa had noticed that "seven American citizens…all are colored" were employed by the Ethiopian government, including "John C. Robinson, colonel in the Ethiopian Air Force…"[37]

The invasion of Ethiopia and Rome's ambitious colonialism, provided Benito Mussolini with a rationale for stirring up discord in Kenya,[38] just as the spectacle of Italian prisoners-of-war being guarded by Africans in Nairobi did no favors for white supremacy. As Martin Delaney had prophesied, East Africa being on a direct route to "East Asia" was not insignificant either, as the Japanese Empire began to joust with its British counterpart in the 1930s.[39] London had to decide whether its ossified rules governing privileges for those of "Pure European Descent"[40] required a severe adjustment.

Kenya's strategic location was solidified after the opening of the Suez Canal quickened the decision to make East Africa the center of British imperial strategy, given its direct link by sea to the jewel that was India and the gem that was Hong Kong: this was magnified during World War II. The critical port that was Aden and the fabulous oil wealth of the Arabian peninsula were simply northeast. Kisumu possessed one of the largest airports in Africa and was a critical stopover on the journey to oil-rich regions due east,[41] inevitably depositing alien ideas on unfamiliar shores. The Kagnew base in what was then neighboring Ethiopia was deemed to be Washington's most vital facility in Sub-Saharan Africa.[42] Nairobi was seen as the gateway to the largely uncharted riches of Africa's vast interior. Well after the war against Japan concluded, the Belgian diplomat, Roger Ockrent, noted the tie between the Congo and the successful conclusion of that conflict. This then colony, he said, furnished pitchblende when it was a "rare commodity in uranium" and indispensable for the nuclear bombing that concluded the Pacific War.[43]

Kenya was in a dangerous neighborhood—perhaps the most perilous on the planet—as in years to come Uganda (Idi Amin), Rwanda, and Burundi (genocide), Ethiopia (deadly famine), Sudan (Darfur and accusations of genocide), and Congo (fratricidal conflict) would garner global headlines.

London also had to be concerned about "colour bar incidents" among "coloured" colonials passing through ports in Kenya and South Africa.[44] This was not unrelated to the sensitive matter of Africans consorting with African Americans, in

Kenya and points east, for example, the war against Japan in Burma. For it was during such bracing encounters that Africans received detailed histories about the liberation of Haiti along with other militant advice. East African soldiers acknowledged that conversations with African Americans had the "strongest impact on their lives," as—according to the scholar Okete J.E. Shiroya—"there began to develop among black soldiers—Africans and black Americans—a kind of 'pan-blackness,' which until then had become unknown among black soldiers." At times African American soldiers would march alongside African soldiers as they confronted their British officers in demands for higher pay. African Americans helped African soldiers to escape brutal commands. British officers initially discouraged and later forbade any meetings between these two groups.[45]

In the minds of the colonialists, these African American soldiers provided a dangerously bad example. Their worst fears were realized when a battalion of the 812th Engineers "(colored)" arrived in Kenya in July 1942. Some amongst them, according to a U.S. officer, were dreaded "agitators on the question of 'their rights'" and somehow launched an "attack…on native African police," as they "procured rifles, broke into the ammunition, and procured ammunition. They milled about the entrance of the camp for sometime and disobeyed the orders of the sentry," then "opened fire on the Police Station…"[46]

These swaggering African Americans, brimming with fire and brimstone and quick to respond to racist slights, were also thought to provide a bad example when it came to the ultra-sensitive matter of miscegenation. In a confidential message, the British leader, William Dimoline, was aghast while observing that "European women were actually dancing in the Ngomas with African ranks. This will cease and will on no account be permitted," he insisted firmly. With horror, he noted, "I have seen letters from African ranks…in which they ask why are they not allowed to marry white women. There have also been cases of assault and rape of white women by African ranks, and these cases have arisen by too much familiarity proving of the truth of the saying 'familiarity breeds contempt.'"[47]

From gnashing their teeth about African American soldiers, the colonialists had to then wring their hands about African American sailors. In a "secret" dispatch in 1942, Kenya's Director of Intelligence and Security expressed "apprehension" due to the "possible effect on local natives of contact with American Negro seamen, who enjoy a far superior status and scale of salary to the African native." Thus, it was concluded with sadness, "as a result of these contacts and the inevitable comparisons of their respective modes of living which will arise, a possible source of unrest and discontentment amongst the African native will be provided."[48] Yes, agreed Washington's man in Nairobi: these seamen were "apt to go ashore dressed in fine clothes and to spend money freely among the native populations;" it was true that "local officials" saw "in American seamen a possible and effective means of creating unrest among the native population…"[49]

This was no minor matter, as the U.S.-based National Maritime Union was known to have a competent corps of black Communists in the leadership, who

were known for their hostility to colonialism.[50] Apprehensions were thought to have reached realization in late 1948 when John Louis Ross, an African American sailor, was discovered residing illegally in Nairobi.[51] Kenyan intelligence thought it had reason to believe that he "had been contacting Jomo Kenyatta, Senior Chief Koinange and other African politicians." Taking advantage of the fact that African Americans could blend in effortlessly in a Nairobi crowd, he had been residing in the Jubilee Hotel, "under the name of John Buganda" and, suspiciously, had previously visited Lagos and the United Kingdom. He was said to be "acquainted with the West African [leader] Dr. Azikiwe, George Padmore and Peter Mbiu Koinange, the latter having given him names of contacts in this Colony . . ." It was believed, it was asserted disconsolately, "that he was sent here by a Negro organization in America . . ." Ross, a resident of Mount Vernon, just north of the Bronx, New York,[52] was able to roam around Kenya for seven months before being detected. The U.S. vice consul, hailing from a nation where the slightest twitch toward anticolonialism was thought to have been inspired by Moscow, was keen to note that Kenyan intelligence had made "no mention of Communist inspiration for Ross's African safari"—-though this agency had "stated personally to the writer that he is certain that it was so inspired," as they were "of the firm opinion that Ross' principal activity was the fomenting of political agitation among the Africans . . ."[53]

A central problem for the colonialists in Kenya was that its role as a racist settler state attracted the ire of the Pan-African world in a way that other parts of Africa did not—perhaps in a way that even the giant in this category, South Africa, did not. Thus, about a decade before Ross's auspicious arrival in East Africa, London was worrying about "an American citizen named Charles Fisk of 144–69 Barclay Avenue, Flushing, New York, USA;" he was the "contact of British Negro agitators," they thought, "and was apparently in residence in East Africa from about 1900 to 1902."[54] Then there was the even larger matter of Jomo Kenyatta, the leader of anticolonial forces in Kenya, who in the 1930s was residing in London where he was befriended by Paul Robeson, known to be quite close to U.S. Communists, and Ralph Bunche (who took lessons in Swahili from this leading anticolonial figure). Kenyatta was also receiving—or so London thought—a "considerable amount of correspondence from the Kikuyu Central Association and"—it was added with a note of concern—"correspondence from the United States of America . . ."[55] London feared nervously the notion that colonized Africa might be in touch with African Americans. W.E.B. Du Bois, the human rights crusader, "Father of Pan-Africanism," and intrepid traveler lamented his difficulty in getting visas to visit colonized Africa.[56]

But it would take more than sharp-eyed consular officers to quarantine British East Africa, shielding it from potential dissidence emanating from North America. This angst-ridden trepidation was exaggerated by the Cold War, which posited the existence of a radical trans-national octopus that respected neither boundaries nor sovereignty. Robert Ruark, perhaps the leading translator of Kenyan realities for a U.S. audience, termed the "Mau Mau" an "African Communist Unit."[57] Much was made of the fact that Jomo

Kenyatta, believed at one time to be the evil genius motivating "Mau Mau" acted in the 1930s film *Sanders of the River* starring his friend, Paul Robeson, who reportedly gave his Kenyan friend phonograph records and a gramophone; reputedly they visited each other's residences in London repeatedly over an extended period of time—Robeson's, a bookish and unpretentious set of rooms near the Strand, while Kenyatta resided in an even more modest setting near Victoria Station.[58] Such camaraderie—along with Kenyatta's journey to Moscow—gave life to the widely reported notion that the Kenyan leader was also a Communist.

These rumors about a Communist-inspired war of liberation in Kenya hardly were dispelled when Robeson's Council on African Affairs—believed to be similarly inspired—emerged in the early 1950s as Kenyatta's chief supporter in the United States. This was occurring, as Robeson-style radicalism was being purged from Black America,[59] creating favorable conditions for the growth of ideologies[60] that were not as forgiving of Euro-Americans as an undistinguished whole and willing to welcome a movement—"Mau Mau"—in Kenya that was thought to be exacting a justifiable revenge against them. This was also propelled by the rise in popularity of Malcolm X's Nation of Islam, which considered Euro-Americans to be "devils" and was buoyed particularly by the epochal Suez Crisis of 1956 that forced a predominantly Islamic Egypt into the spotlight, as it came under attack by Israel, Great Britain and France. Strikingly, in Kenya the authorities were keen on repressing a Left-led labor movement centered in Mombasa and spearheaded by South Asians and, arguably, this too helped to prepare the battlefield for the rise of an alternative and different movement: "Mau Mau." In the fall of 1961, the U.S. emissary announced with apparent irritation that "Kenya's only self-admitted Communist, Makhan Singh, was freed of all forms of restriction…"[61]

This was occurring—as spooked by Cold War concerns about Moscow subversion of presumably unwitting Africans—Washington began to pay more attention to what was routinely described as the "Dark Continent." Humphrey Bogart won Hollywood's highest honor—an "Oscar"—in *The African Queen*, which would have been filmed in Kenya, but for the dearth of picturesque rivers and instead was made in this nation's neighbors—or so argued his co-star, Katharine Hepburn.[62] Clark Gable won no awards for his star turn in *Mogambo*, filmed in Kenya as the war of liberation was generating headlines—though the discerning viewer could detect a scenario where Africans were being subordinated by Europeans, an easy lesson to swallow in a Jim Crow society.

Supposedly, the cauliflower-eared Gable had a grand old time cavorting in Kenya with his co-stars—the ravishing Ava Gardner and the pulchritudinous Grace Kelly, among others—which was not hard for Euro-Americans to do in a colony that had long since gained a hard-earned reputation for licentiousness. The dissolute Ernest Hemingway was not above reveling in his "first class life" in Kenya at the height of the "State of Emergency," referring lasciviously to being "in love with 2 [African girls]," which he added perhaps necessarily, "gives me too bad a hard-on." Yes, it was a "lovely country," he thought. They were "black and very beautiful," one being his "fiancée."[63] Hemingway

was basking in the unfortunate reality that—as one scholar put it—"until the mid-1950s when the law was changed, a white male having sexual intercourse with an African woman suffered no penalty, while an African man having sexual relations with a white female could be hanged…"[64] Such double-standards aided Colonial Kenya in garnering its well-merited reputation for being a citadel of "White Mischief,"[65] an African Las Vegas before the heyday of this desert bastion of sin. Nairobi was the "Paris of the East African coast," thought the U.S. writer, Negley Farson—in fact, a combination Valhalla and Shangri-la, at least for those of "Pure European Descent."[66] Thus, in one appropriately named "Happy Valley" abode, weekend guests were required to switch partners, frequently more than once before the weekend was over; Europeans there, according to one report, were "not at all reluctant to use narcotics as well as alcohol, and both cocaine and morphine were commonplace." Sexual hijinks were so common, it was stated, "that it often seemed that everyone slept with everyone else, then, after a period of repose did so again."[67] In Colonial Kenya, sex was more than the poor person's grand opera.

There was a gross crudity among the settlers that was hard to disguise. The visiting U.S. journalist, John Gunther, noticed in the mid-1950s when instead of going to the toilet after a formal dinner party, "gentlemen" after dinner chose to "walk out on the lawn, and in the equatorial darkness stand in a row facing a hedge or garden wall, and there relieve themselves while murmuring a low toast 'to Africa.' "[68]

In such an atmosphere, distorted sexuality became a method by which racial privilege and its necessary complement—humiliation of Africans—could be expressed. When the Hollywood stars, Ava Gardner and Grace Kelly, arrived in Kenya to make a movie, just after the proclamation of the "State of Emergency," they found themselves surrounded by Africans, when the former actor reportedly said to the future member of the royal family in Monaco, "Gracie, have you ever seen a black cock?" She then proceeded to lift the loincloth of an African to show her one, then added flippantly, "Frank's is bigger," referring to her husband, the singer Sinatra.[69]

Not surprisingly, the colonists—and their Euro-American allies—were willing to engage in mass slaughter in order to preserve their way of life. When news of the French slaughter of tens of thousands in Madagascar in 1948 in the wake of an anticolonial rebellion reached Kenya, quite a few settlers heartily approved.[70] George Padmore, the former U.S. resident, who also sojourned in London and Ghana in pursuit of Pan-Africanism, noticed in the mid-1930s a "definite fascist mentality among European settlers in Kenya." "What difference is there," he pondered plaintively, "between the racial philosophy of Britons in East Africa and the Nazis in Germany?"[71] The colony, he said, had "the greatest proportion among its inhabitants of ex-soldiers, generals, colonels, majors, of any country in the world"—which predisposed the colonialists toward brutally martial remedies. Furthermore, he maintained, Colonial Kenya contained a "goodly number of names in Burke's Peerage," which meant that "in no part of the Empire is social snobbery and racial arrogance quite so blatantly manifested as by the 'Lords of the Kenya Highlands.' " One of the colony's leaders,

Lord Erroll, "went out there in 1934 to institute a fascist movement" in order to solidify a preexisting way of thinking. Only the Rhodesias were comparable, he asserted.[72]

As a result, many Euro-Americans, residents of a nation that, along with Russia, had the largest percentage of those of European descent on the planet viewed the struggle of Colonial Kenya as their own. The highly religious mass organization known as "Moral Rearmament," which attracted to its banner some of the leading lights of U.S. cultural life—including Stan "The Man" Musial, the slugging, slope-shouldered St. Louis Cardinals outfielder—actually administered the "Athi River Detention Camp" designed to "convert hard-core Mau Mau terrorists," though the authorities deemed their effort to be a "complete waste of time and money."[73] Alternatively, U.S. congressional leaders Sam Rayburn, Joseph Martin, and John McCormack told Governor Evelyn Baring in Nairobi that "we heartily commend this [MR] mission to you and to your people."[74] Writing in early 1953 from the Hubbard Dianetic Center on Sunset Boulevard in Hollywood, the leading Scientologist, A.E. van Vogt—enmeshed in a faith that was to claim Clark Gable's logical successor: Tom Cruise—counseled the Kenyan authorities on how to tame the insurgency.[75]

Continuing a historical trend, Africans—on the other hand—found a warm embrace from African Americans when seeking support for their struggle. "Mau Mau" quickly became a metaphor for fierce resistance and was adopted as such by African Americans, before spreading as a verb to the population at large. In the heart of darkness that was Jim Crow Mississippi, Charles Evers—brother of the slain civil rights martyr, Medgar Evers—contemplated early on, "Why not create a Mau Mau in Mississippi?" That is, "each time whites killed a Negro, why not drive to another town, find a bad sheriff or cop, and kill him in a secret hit-and-run raid." So, they "bought bullets and made some idle Mau Mau plans" before—presumably—dropping the idea.[76] Later the *New York Times* reported nervously that Malcolm X called for a "Mau Mau in [the United States]" as a way to "even [the] score."[77]

The man who called himself Charles 37X Kenyatta—in obvious homage to the Kenyan patriarch—was said by the Harlem-based weekly, the *New York Amsterdam News,* to have served as confidant and bodyguard of the heralded Malcolm X, before becoming "founder and leader of the Mau Mau Society, a paramilitary group that offered protection to the community while raising social and political consciousness. For a while his group published a magazine called 'Black Force.' "[78] Bobby Seale, a co-founder of the heralded Black Panther Party (BPP)—which championed armed self-defense and, thus, was regarded by the U.S. authorities as highly dangerous—was marked irrevocably by Kenya. He recalled "reading Jomo Kenyatta's 'Facing Mount Kenya' " and realizing that "Tarzan did not run Africa" and, correspondingly, Tarzan's adherents on this side of the Atlantic could be challenged forcefully.[79]

The same holds true for his ideological foe, Maulana Karenga of Los Angeles, whose "cultural nationalists" clashed sharply with the BPP. Yet, according to one analyst, Kenyatta's book "profoundly influenced" him: his adopted name—"Karenga"—comes from the Kikuyu tradition of independent schools free of

missionary influence.[80] That Kenyatta influenced the clashing Seale and Karenga alike, suggests that the intellectual, Theodore Draper, is correct when he suggests that "by inspiring" the Kenyan leader, Paul Robeson and W.E.B. Du Bois influenced a generation of activists long after they had been marginalized or disappeared.[81]

During the height of the U.S. war against Vietnam, the Pentagon—according to the *New York Times*—found "'isolated instances' where a black organization called De Mau Mau had existed at [U.S.] military installations;" it "appeared to have been organized among black marines, some of them in Vietnam." Apparently, this group was envisioned as a kind of undercover guerrilla unit.[82] Allegedly they murdered a number of Euro-Americans randomly in what they deemed to be revenge against racism.[83] Hakim A. Jamal, a comrade of Malcolm X who was reportedly implicated in these slayings, later acknowledged, "I wanted to go to Africa, but not to study Islam. I'd rather join the Mau Mau…"[84] So concerned were the U.S. authorities about such organizations that when in 1968 the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI) expanded their notorious COINTELPRO—or counter-intelligence program—one of their chief goals was to "'prevent the coalition of militant black nationalist groups' that 'might be the first step toward a real "Mau Mau" in America, the beginning of a true black revolution.'"[85]

Thus, the rise of "Mau Mau" seemed to portend a Day of Reckoning, Judgment Day for those who had profited from or acquiesced to white supremacy. Ineluctably, this spawned hysteria near and far. One journalist argued that "Mau Mau was a determined retrogression to bestiality, even to the literal extent of copulating with animals. Even the wild animals," he asserted, "accepted the Mau Mau terrorists as fellow-animals…" As he saw it, "wherever we are now we are in Kenya; for certainly the operations of the anti-white conspiracies, the techniques of the Communists, Liberals and One-Worlders, remain significantly identical whether they be applied in Kenya or Alabama…"[86]

This transoceanic influence traveled in two directions. "People in Africa related to struggles of black people throughout the world to defeat racism and segregation," affirmed the self-proclaimed "Mau Mau Daughter," Wambui Waiyaki Otieno of Kenya. Thus, she continued, "we named our group the Jim Crow Action group because we saw our struggle as the same one. We in Kenya particularly identified with the freedom struggles in the United States and Jamaica," while "Martin Luther King, Jr. was a hero to us all…"[87] Dedan Kimathi, a legendary national hero of Kenya, forwarded a copy of the Kenya Land and Freedom Army charter to W.E.B. Du Bois, shortly after its formulation.[88] This sturdy bilateral friendship between Africans and African Americans is one reason why the contemporary African American writer, John Slaughter, is no doubt correct when he asserts that "for many, Kenya *is* Africa."[89] [emphasis-original]

This fearsome image of "Mau Mau" paved the way for the lionizing of Kenyan leader, Tom Mboya, when he arrived to great acclaim in the United States in the mid-1950s. He was thought to represent a moderate—and moderating—alternative. An effective orator in English with a disarming smile that graced a stark and dark—albeit cherubic—visage, Mboya quickly claimed a vaunted *TIME* magazine cover

profile, multiple appearances on Sunday morning talk shows, thousands of dollars in donations, most notably from U.S. trade unions and personal relationships with leading figures for example, John F. Kennedy and Richard M. Nixon. Just before the critical November 1960 presidential election, the GOP candidate gushed in informing Mboya of what he already knew—"few in public life today," said Nixon, "have had such a remarkable record of accomplishment and success as you have."[90] In turn, Jomo Kenyatta—not as favored in Washington as Mboya—bluntly told President Kennedy just before his nation's December 1963 independence that the "people of Kenya deplore continuing oppression of Negroes in [the] Southern United States"; forcefully, he added, "we express solidarity with American Negro freedom fighters in their struggle for human rights."[91] Washington had to worry that the words of the influential Kenyatta carried weight on the continent as a whole, which would be quite damaging to the Cold War ambitions of the United States.

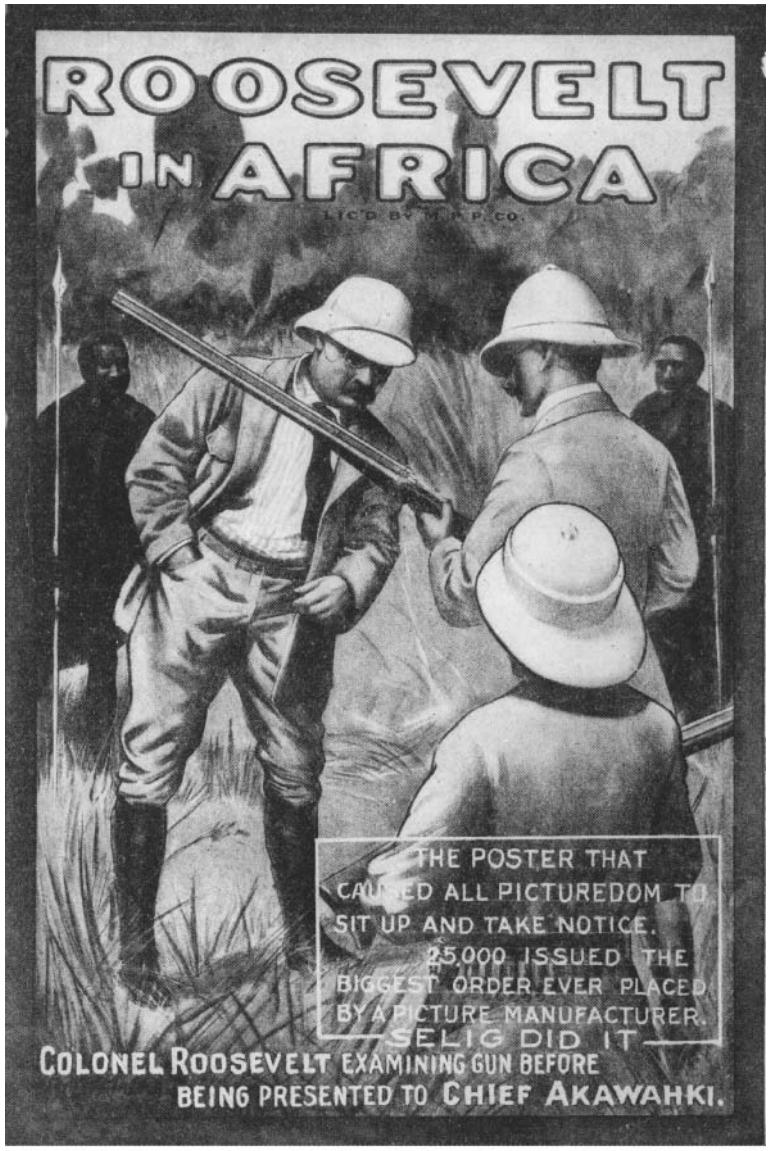
There was a direct connection between this latter concern and Washington's decision to bring hundreds of Kenyan students to the United States to study in college, the idea being that this would predispose them toward Washington in the Cold War competition. Thus, it was in August 1959 that Mboya—the engineer of this bold project—wrote U.S. labor operative, Irving Brown, thought to have close ties to U.S. intelligence to introduce him to "one of my intimate friends." He was referring to "Mr. Barack Obama," who Mboya was "helping to go for further education in the United States of America this year—Hawaii," the fiftieth and perhaps final state in the union. "He is calling in Paris for one or two days," added Mboya helpfully, and "I therefore ask you kindly to welcome him and help him out…"[92]

Mr. Obama did make it to the Pacific islands, where he fathered a son in 1961 who in early 2007, just after announcing his candidacy for the U.S. presidency—a scant few years after being elected to the U.S. Senate representing Illinois—was to be found speaking to a rally at Brown Chapel A.M.E. Church in historic Selma, Alabama. He was addressing the profound significance of events that had occurred there, shortly after his birth, when the nation was wrestling with the kind of white supremacy that, likewise, had suffocated too many dreams in his father's homeland. Easily adopting the rhythmic cadences of the minister who routinely held the pulpit, Senator Obama spoke of how events in Selma had a "rippling effect across the ocean, giving hope to [his] grandfather and father in Africa." He observed that his "grandfather was a cook" in Colonial Kenya and was regarded as a "house boy" even as he passed his sixth decade. "They wouldn't call him by his last name," the senator added ruefully. "Sound familiar?" Seeking to establish his claim to being part of Black America after a number of well-regarded Black Intellectuals had questioned his status, given his parentage and upbringing, Senator Obama added with an exhortatory flourish, "So don't tell me I don't have a claim on Selma, Alabama! Don't tell me I'm not coming home to Selma, Alabama!"[93]

The senator had a point. There had long been a cherished and dear tie between Africans in Kenya and African Americans in the United States that no amount of maundering by chatterers could eviscerate. In many ways, this relationship was redolent of the kind of Pan-Africanism that W.E.B. Du Bois had envisioned

when he initially considered that the "color line" was the twentieth century's major problem, an issue that had yet to evaporate at the time that Senator Obama ascended to a bully pulpit in Selma, Alabama.

This is a book about this relationship, that admittedly focuses heavily on the U.S. side of the equation. Yes, the struggle in the United States sent "ripples" flowing across the ocean but there were simultaneous currents flowing as well from Kenya.



Elaborate Roosevelt Poster Issued by the Selig Polyscope Company.

Figure 1 Roosevelt in Africa…examining gun before being presented to Chief Akawahki.

Source: Courtesy of Library, Prints & Photographs Division [LC-USZ62-60631].

After leaving the presidency, Theodore Roosevelt made a highly publicized visit to East Africa, where he encountered a number of other U.S. nationals and, thus, underscored this region's growing importance to Washington.

1

Into Africa

Theodore Roosevelt was pleased with himself, his words, and his audience.

It was August 1909 and only recently he had stepped down from his post as U.S. president. He had decided to take a long journey to a most unlikely place, a dusty site that was little more than a village: Nairobi; he was there addressing an appreciative crowd of European settlers who seemed to greet his every word with prolonged cheers. And well they should. Stormy applause accompanied his endorsement as the portly politician with the bristling moustache drew parallels between the crossing of the frontier in the U.S. West and the colonial enterprise then unfolding in East Africa.

Perhaps his audience drew inferences from his subsequent remarks, his paeans of praise for the therapeutic value of "lion shooting," coupled with his acknowledgment that "few people outside of Africa realize that there is here in Africa under the equator a real white man's country."

But wasn't this a British colony and was not the fabled TR a representative of a nation that had come into being in a bloody revolt against London? The United States, unlike its European counterparts, was less concerned with ethnic definitions of nationhood but, instead, kept its eye on the prize of the racial—the much rewarded construction of "whiteness."

But what about the inconvenient fact that TR happened to be in Africa, which was far from empty—would not the denizens there take umbrage at this invasion of outsiders? "The tribes hereabout are of course hopelessly incompetent to better themselves," he assayed, "or to utilize this country to advantage without white leadership and direction and progress among them will be the work not of years but of many generations." So, forward with the unpleasant task of ousting the indigenes and seizing their land, was his unavoidable conclusion.[1]

It was on March 23, 1909 that the former president set forth from Manhattan with his son, Kermit and his arrangements made by the noted freebooter, Frederick Courtney Selous. Arriving in East Africa, he was charmed quickly by the "little pipits" singing "overhead like Missouri skylarks." He was also impressed with the number of U.S. missionaries he encountered, including the "American Mission Station at Machakos…" It was at "Kijabe" that he "spent several exceedingly interesting hours at the American Industrial Mission. Its

head, Mr. Hurlburt, had called on me in Washington at the White House in the preceding October…" Similarly intriguing was his bumping into "Messrs. Attenborough, settlers on shores of the lake," meaning Naivasha. "Two days after leaving Lake Hannington, they camped near the ostrich farm of Mr. London, an American from Baltimore. He had been waging war on the lions and leopards, because they attacked his ostriches…" TR was not ineffectual either in his assault on wildlife, bagging 9 lions, 15 zebras, 10 oryx, 12 topi, 18 oribi—and more, a grand total of 512 animals slaughtered between himself and his son. Photographed in his popular account of this journey in pith helmet and rifle, this bloodlust raised disturbing questions about the connection between indifference to the life of animals—and a similar insouciance toward the lives of Africans.[2]

Roosevelt's bowing to London's colony was not foreordained.[3] The presence of colonists in East Africa in itself was due in no small part to London's nervousness about Washington's rise. Beginning with the antebellum era, British officials were becoming increasingly concerned about their nation's dependence on the United States for raw cotton. They actively sought to augment their Empire by developing alternate cotton sources free from the perils of North American speculators in cotton. Reputedly, David Livingstone's dangerous journey into Africa included testing the possibility of growing cotton in order to relieve British dependence on U.S. sources.[4] London also had to be concerned with Germany's rise, as its base in Tanganyika had to be challenged—or so it was thought—which preordained a British colony in neighboring Kenya. This was not a simple choice, as Kenya was replete with deserts and its top-soils were subject to easy wind and water erosion.

Nonetheless, as the nineteenth century was closing and a new century was rising, a so-called East Africa Protectorate was established in the region, which was a prelude to the formal establishment of the Kenya Colony in 1920. The former U.S. president, who arrived in the middle of this transition, did not evidently notice one similarity between the land he led and the one he visited. For it was a few years after his arrival in Kenya that a District Commissioner there, Ralph Skene, wrote movingly about the effects of slavery in the region surrounding Lamu, Malindi, and Kipini, and the "pitiful conditions of a few ex-slaves," he observed affectedly, "whose advance age and infirmities prevent them from earning a livelihood. They consequently wander about the town in an aimless manner, getting a few mouthfuls of food here and there."[5] It was unclear if these unfortunates were among the legions who were flogged routinely by the colonial authorities.[6] They were all part of a radical transformation of the region engineered by London. "Capitalism has been violently forced on East Africa in a single generation," said a British think-tank in 1926: "there is perhaps no country in the world where the working of the capitalist machine is more nakedly revealed than in East Africa…"[7]

Roosevelt, for his part, in addition to finding Africans backward and primitive and worthy of ouster, favored what he called the "English-speaking race," which yoked together his homeland with Britain, Australia, and, notably, Southern Africa (where, again, German Southwest Africa or Namibia was confronted): the Dutch and their brethren in South Africa could gain admission to this hallowed grouping which—in his mind—was destined to dominate the world.[8]

In any case, Washington was a rising power—not the preeminent one it was to become—and the better part of wisdom may have been to preach, as Roosevelt did, notions of "white" or "English-speaking" hegemony, as opposed to the "American" variety, which may have been unrealistic or, worse, could have attracted the unwelcome attention of not only London but Berlin and Tokyo as well.

The year 1909 did not mark Roosevelt's initial interest in East Africa, in any case, suggestive of his continuing attention to this region. He had been in close contact with Leigh S.J. Hunt, a U.S. national who—in a sense—had played upon London's desire to diversify its source for cotton by developing a huge plantation in the Sudan and becoming wealthy as a result.[9] Yet Roosevelt's safari, according to one account, was "one of the pivotal events in early Kenya history, because it helped put the place on the map."[10] It is unclear if TR knew the U.S. national, Arthur Donaldson Smith, who departed from London on June 1, 1894 and spent a year and a half exploring the region surrounding the Ogaden in East Africa, becoming one of the first individuals of European origin to reach Lake Rudolf. This patrician physician was trained at Harvard and Johns Hopkins and eventually donated a huge collection of ethnographic materials to the University of Pennsylvania.[11]

The point was that with the "closing of the frontier" in North America, then the expansion to Hawaii, footloose U.S. nationals continued on to East Africa, where colonial projects were just taking root. Typical was H.H. Horne, known as "Long" Horne to his colleagues who by the early 1900s was serving London as an officer in Kenya in one of the more far-flung provinces. He had ranched in Wyoming previously, before serving as vice consul in Mexico, then fighting in the Boer War. He was a product of an era when national and patriotic bonds were not as firm and unyielding as they are today and a common desire to oust the supposedly uncivilized prevailed.[12]

Thus it was that U.S. nationals began to flock to East Africa, to a country slightly larger in territory than France and about the same size as Texas or twice the square mileage of Great Britain and the Republic of Ireland. There they found sites such as Eldoret that one visitor maintained could only be "likened to the towns of the Old American West with its single street lined haphazardly with buildings." Another judged the budding town that was Nairobi disappointing, with its "reckless Wild West atmosphere" that was no more than a "[W]estern frontier town." One writer compared Nairobi at certain times to "Dodge City at the end of a cattle drive" as he espied "men on horseback" who "galloped through town, shooting out streetlights with pistols and rifles. Others engaged in fistfights, which often resulted in someone being thrown out a window, even from upper floors." Increasingly, women missionaries from the United States migrated to East Africa, for example, the Kansan, Alta Howard Hoyt, who journeyed there with her spouse in 1911 and Ruth T. Shaffer of Chicago who ventured into the land of the Masai a few years later.[13] Missionaries, in short, flocked to Kenya in significant number. The African Inland Mission (AIM), the Seventh Day Adventists, the United Methodist Mission, the American Methodist Mission, and the Mennonites of the United States were among the early missions that featured an abundance of U.S. nationals.[14] But it was not just missionaries that were

being drawn to East Africa. At the advanced age of 73, the celebrated naturalist, John Muir—traveling alone—was to be found in Kenya in 1912.[15]

Still, it would be an error to assume that all of European descent were welcomed to what had been denoted as British East Africa. When discussion emerged in 1903 about dispatching beleaguered Eastern European Jewry to this region, controversy erupted. This minority was subjected to a kind of vilification and denigration in Kenya that some had thought was reserved only for Africans. One local newspaper challenged its Thesaurus by deploying every possible epithet and every term of opprobrium, every cliché and unflattering stereotype that were then common in anti-Semitic discourse, suggesting how difficult it would be to localize bigotry—as would be discovered belatedly a few decades later—against Africans solely.[16]

Such storm clouds did not blur TR's rainbow of optimism about Kenya's prospects. Traveling with a retinue of African servants of regimental dimensions and slaughtering wildlife as if he were head of an abattoir, the increasingly corpulent politician trudged through Africa. While not firing his weapon, TR could be found reclining in the home of another wealthy man—William Northrup McMillan, son of the founder of the American Car & Foundry Company. He had traveled to Kenya via the Blue Nile in 1903, with his spouse Lucie Webber of Northampton, Massachusetts. He obtained land near Ol Donyo Sabuk, a mountain near Thika, and started a farm that he called Juja. Once tall and muscular, McMillan—who spoke English with the kind of Southern drawl that would have made him a natural for a Deep South plantation—eventually accumulated girth even more quickly than he gathered wealth.[17] Well over six feet tall, his midsection became so formidable, supposedly he had to walk through most doors sideways. After leaving the Hill School, and trying his luck at ranching in New Mexico, he kept moving toward the sun in search of opportunity before landing in East Africa, though still enmeshed in profitable investments in St. Louis and London. After 1905 he divided his time between his sprawling estate in Kenya and his palatial home in Berkeley Square.[18]

"We are staying at the really beautiful and comfortable farm of Mr. and Mrs. McMillan," TR informed a relative in May 1909; "you know all their McMillan cousins well." Life there was "fairly luxurious," he confided, in dramatic contrast to the existence of the Africans who surrounded them. "What queer contrasts [this] life affords!" Yes, it was quite pleasant. With lush vegetation and cool night air, magnificent panoramas of the Athi River, gorgeous and abundant butterflies, an abundance of birds (the white-browed sparrow weaver, the purple-breasted sunbird, the speckled moosebird, the yellow-vented bulbul, the mourning dove, among others), TR had landed in the heart of the Kikuyu homeland.

But that was far from TR's contented mind in 1909. "I am sitting on the cool veranda of a very nice house," he said overlooking a lush garden. "The three native gardeners working it are savages," he opined, "their ears slit and stretched in such fantastic shapes that they can put all kinds of bright objects in the lobes…they have blankets, but as they wear nothing else whatever, excepting brass bracelets and frequently put their blankets around their necks

or heads…"[19] These Africans were in dramatic contrast to the settlers. "I am," he pronounced, "as I expected I would be, a pretty good imperialist!" Yes, he waxed, "these settlers remind me so much of my beloved westerners that I feel absolutely at home among them…"[20]

Thus, TR was not engaged in puffery in his awestruck descriptions of McMillan's sprawling estate in the fabled Highlands of Kenya, a region that was to be at the epicenter of a guerrilla conflict decades later. It "is one of the most remarkable places imaginable," thought the writer, Percy Madeira. "Every luxury that Europe and America could devise is there: a fine, comfortable bungalow supplied with ice-plant electric lights and everything else that one could think of…" Of course, there was a nagging problem of how to induce Africans to labor for next to nothing. "These dawdling natives," Madeira spat out; "there was no meeting which I attended in Nairobi where a number of settlers were together," he said, "that the question of labor was not discussed with a keenness and a vehemence that showed an interest not exceeded by that which conditions arouse in discussion here in America."[21] The methods to induce labor in East Africa, however, were much more flexible than in North America, though when the writer, A. Barton Hepburn was on safari not long after McMillan's estate had been consolidated, he noted with despair, "thirty-six of our porters deserted, without cause, without notice, simply disappeared…" He did not tie this mass fleeing to his observation that "tested from my American point, the labor seemed very cheap." Born in Colton, New York, Hepburn had crossed the Great Plains in 1872 and by his own admission this frontier encounter spurred his journey to the frontier that was Kenya.[22]

Roosevelt and McMillan were among a coterie of men of European descent with trans-continental reach and a penchant for adventure—and dispossession. This band of brothers included the former President's close comrade, Frederick Courtenay Selous, who hunted in the U.S. West, sojourned in Montana—and, along the way, was a principal player in the war against the Ndebele in Southern Africa. Roosevelt at times pined when he did not see him, to the point where Selous' hagiographic biographer noted decorously that his "intimacy with the President was of that charming character which unfortunately we now only associate with early Victorian days…" It was Selous who spent almost a year making the arrangements for TR's extended journey through Africa, a job facilitated by the fact that McMillan was their mutual friend.[23] Together TR and Selous experienced adventures that were the stuff of future stories, for example, their marching through Uganda and the Congo to Sudan, enjoying soup from an elephant's trunk, accompanied by a small regiment of African laborers, straining to bear the loads they had to endure.[24]

In many ways, it was the fabulously wealthy McMillan who was at the center of this universe. Born in St. Louis to Canadian parents in 1872 he became fascinated early in life with big game hunting and exploration. After settling down in Kenya, he produced maize, flax and sisal on his commodious ranch and became a member of the ruling Legislative Council for the Ukamba constituency.[25] Like TR and Selous, he was a dedicated hunter and traveler, journeying to the heart of the Empire—India—before Roosevelt's arrival.[26]

McMillan did not have to fight his way out of poverty; indeed, his father was a business partner of the notorious plutocrat, Jay Gould[27] and a close relative was a U.S. senator. In a sense, he was an example of how the extension of a nascent U.S. imperialism was buoyed by British ties: at one time he actually pondered "naturalization;" "there is a point which hinges on Father's naturalization," he offered, "which according to English law they are not sure I am already a British subject,"[28] a point that would complicate the settling of his estate after his premature death.

He had attracted the traveling bug early, venturing on an exploring expedition through what is now Ethiopia to ascertain if the Blue Nile were navigable and received two decorations from King Menelik for his troubles.[29] Even while residing in Africa, however, he was still heavily engaged in stock trading in the United States[30] and the Panic of 1907 may have affected his net worth adversely—he was pondering a "forced liquidation" of his U.S. assets—driving him further to sink roots deeper in Colonial Kenya. At this juncture, he had not felt the need to choose between the powers in East Africa, since he had spent a few months in German East Africa seeking investments in rubber plantations. He envisioned a handsome 30% profit, suggesting what attracted so many colonists to this region.[31] This investment was consummated but the gathering mortal conflict between Berlin and London forced him to make a choice between the two.[32]

Thus, he found time to join British forces during World War I and served with such distinction that he was knighted. He was heir to a million-dollar fortune—that he expanded tremendously by dint of his ruling over a small principality of 35,000 acres in Kenya, which involved, ruling over increasingly restive Africans. Yet he was not fazed by the possible dangers, telling his hometown newspaper in St. Louis that "I wouldn't live here if you gave me the town…" Perhaps understandably he preferred his home on the edge of Nairobi—which had so impressed TR—with its beautiful, rambling stone house that included a dozen bedrooms, its 75 acres of gardens, orchards and orange groves, its nine-hole golf course and six tennis courts. Red and purple Bougainville in unequal amounts flaunted itself on the lawns and blue plumbago and pink and white roses twined seemingly everywhere. The gardens featured bananas and sweet corn. There were stables with sixty horses, all fast and game. Not far away were lions, elephants, rhinoceros, leopards, hippopotamus; ostriches abounded, along with zebras and a host of other animals, some of which had been stocked—like the buffalo—for shooting.

There Sir Northrup resided in royal grandeur, as Africans writhed in wretchedness nearby. On a mountain 2,000 feet high, master of all that he surveyed, he and his guests could sit on his massive veranda and espy waterbuck, hartebeests, gazelles, and impalas. Inside his home—one of the largest and most majestic on an otherwise poor continent—this man from St. Louis could stretch his formidable girth amid high-beamed ceilings. It was Sir Northrup who had been essential to introducing coffee plantations into Colonial Kenya and had found a vein of gold after prospecting. It was Sir Northrup who had imported Durham bulls into the country and had crossed them with the humped native cattle with no small success, the hump disappearing in succeeding generations. This led some to term him, "Mokoro"—the "Man of Many Cattle." He was "Sir" Northrup not

least since during the Great War he had equipped a regiment at his own expense, helping to stave off German advance, not to mention some Boer revenge-seeking. Since Germany had fewer colonies than Britain, it could afford to site more of their nationals in East Africa—by one count the former outnumbered the latter by a factor of three in the region. Thus, when the war began, London was grateful that McMillan was on their side; his regiment lost 700 out of 1,100 men in one engagement alone. But the end result of the war was the ouster of Berlin and the addition of millions of acres to the Empire. His spouse, Lady Lucie, was no slouch either, being one of the first women of European descent to penetrate Abyssinia, being received by King Menelik himself. She too had a penchant for slaughtering animals, having killed a lion and hunted tigers in India.

Her husband's waistline seemed to be expanding as rapidly as his fortune, as he headed for 300 jowly pounds. He retained a moustache and a cleft in his square-cut chin—though this physical heft was a turnabout from his childhood days as a virtual invalid. Like his good friend, TR, he was quite small as a child, before sprouting like a weed in his teens. Like TR, he roughed it in the West—New Mexico in his case.

Arriving in East Africa at the turn of the twentieth century, in a pivotal incident he and his men were surrounded by hostile indigenes. McMillan was a distance away when he spotted what was occurring and he sprinted to the scene just as an African struck one of his group. McMillan in turn felled this African by punching him in the jaw with all of his might as he ran toward him. The dazed African landed some feet away, bleeding profusely from his nose and mouth. As the story was told, when the hostile Africans viewed this incident, they were awestruck and immediately respectful, which paved the way for his taking over. On another occasion, McMillan's own porters surrounded him and his companions garbed as for a celebration. The mood shifted as—reputedly—the thumping of drums, incantations, and dancing accompanied the Africans brandishing their spears and bringing them nearer and nearer until a swift movement placed them within a hair's breadth of McMillan's face. Again—as the tale was told—the soon to be flabby St. Louisan did not flinch, did not blink an eye though he did consider pulling his pistol swiftly from his belt. Instead, coolly, he smoked and smiled and, once more, the buffaloed indigenes were so impressed with his imperviousness to fear, they hailed him as their de facto chief[33]—or so it was reported.

It was striking that the man who was one of the most important in the British Empire in East Africa hailed from North America. It was a reflection of London's "overstretch," planting its flag wherever the sun happened to set, though it was outnumbered in population by Germany, Russia, and the United States itself. But only the latter was predominantly English-speaking, facilitating integration into the Empire and virtually preordaining a creeping annexation of said Empire by the much more substantial United States.

Thus, as the Great War lurched to a bloody end, Sir Northrup and Lady Lucie opened the doors of their grand estate to the cream of European society in Kenya. The Governor opened the proceedings and, according to one gushing account, "even the heavens put on a festive look and the heat enabled everyone to put on the prettiest and flimsiest dresses and hats…" In a telling aside, it was noted

that "more than three-fourths of Nairobi was present"—the African majority was not part of this gathering that included "tons of cakes, sandwiches," along with "fortune-telling" and "guessing competitions…"[34] By this time the bulky Sir Northrup had become the leading eminence of posh Nairobi, graying by his late thirties and often to be found in the requisite three-piece suit, an outfit that would have been terribly uncomfortable in most of Africa.[35]

Thus, Sir Northrup was rewarded handsomely for his service to the Empire, though—as it turned out—he may have been simply prescient in foreseeing that London eventually had to yield to Washington and getting in on the ground floor of this seemingly ineluctable process was quite wise. His ties through birth to both London and Washington placed him in a unique position to take advantage of this great historical shift.

Actually, any young [Euro-American] man who had designs on foreign adventure was predisposed to a degree to venture into lands controlled by London. Such was the case with Frederic Burnham, who was born in the United States but wound up allying with Selous in subduing the Ndebele before arriving in Nairobi, then returning to Southern California where he made lucrative oil investments. "King Edward confirmed my majority in the British Army," he asserted with gratitude, "and graciously permitted me to hold my rank without renouncing my American citizenship," which was a "highly prized favor…"—and a boon to London too, he could have added. Perhaps wandering into one of McMillan's soirees, he was struck by the feeling that the "genial hospitality that is extended to every visitor might think that officialdom is given up entirely to teas, tiffins and dinners, with a little horse-racing, golf and polo thrown in for exercise…" The British East Africa Company hired him to explore that vast region and to report upon the value of the minerals and the agricultural and commercial resources of the protectorate. Akin to TR's journey, he chose "twenty white men, drawn from all over the world" to join him in this expedition, along with "five hundred to a thousand askaris [African security forces] and porters who formed the safari that carried out my work" in the first few years of the twentieth century. In Africa he was joined by J. Addison Brown, a mining engineer from the United States. There was Burnham's "own gritty brother-in-law, John Blick" who too "had served under Cecil Rhodes in the [Ndebele] war." Blick, an old African hand, "had led the exploration of the Volta River in West Africa and had also served under" Burnham in yet another African campaign.

But these campaigns, as difficult and important as they may have been, seemed a simple prelude to the conquest of East Africa. "I received every assistance," he averred. One reason why was the perception that "Nairobi seems to be the battle-line of altitude between the jungle and the frost and I sometimes wondered," said Burnham, "as I sat under the shade of the fig conquered cedar, if it were not also the battle-line of the tropics between the white race and the black and whether we whites were not like the cedar tree, to be eventually strangled for invading the African jungle…" But at this moment, Burnham was relatively optimistic. Why? "There should be no vain conceit as to the black man's capacity for understanding and self-government. It would be as insane to give them a smattering of our involved religious beliefs," he sniffed, "and so-called education as it would be to

give our children sticks of dynamite with which to play…" Alas, he concluded, "there is no short cut to civilization. Only as the blacks' skulls grow thinner and their brains heavier will they absorb our ways and standards. At present they are at the stage of development equal to that of children eight or ten years old…"

But all was not lost in that the expeditionary force "were fortunate in discovering a highly value deposit of carbonate of soda in a deep depression of the Rift Valley," though, sadly, "the country apparently was not mineralized as were some sections of Africa to the south…" On the other hand, his spouse "was delighted to find that in that part of Africa there were some well-trained servants…"[36]

The ability to seize huge tracts of land in a pleasant climate with stunning vistas attracted budding colonists to Colonial Kenya, among them a critical number of Euro-Americans who played strategic roles. TR's visit brought the spotlight of publicity on Nairobi and others leapt to follow in his footsteps. Paul J. Rainey of the United States was the first person to introduce the colony to the hunting of lions with imported hounds, formerly used for the hunting of cougars—he killed over a hundred lions by this method; it seems that the mass slaughter of animal life was a prelude to the massive maltreatment of Africans,[37] just as safari tourism in succeeding years attracted even more Euro-Americans to Kenya.[38]

Though Washington had been in conflict with London for a good deal of the nineteenth century, TR spoke for many of his compatriots when he deemed it unwise to align with John Bull's adversaries, not only in Berlin but in Cape Town as well. Thus, he warned Irish Americans that if they chose to make raids into Canada in an attempt to strike at the Empire, he "would promptly clap them in jail…" As the war at the southern tip of Africa between Boer and Briton was entering its terminal phase, he evinced no sympathy for the former, though their plight was analogous to his predecessors who too had warred against rule from London. But as he saw it, the United States was no longer a struggling infant nation but an imperialist power that should be in sync with others in that category. He tended to "believe that England is simply doing towards the Boers what the United States would do in one moment towards, for instance, Nicaragua or Costa Rica if they treated Americans as the Uitlanders have been treated in the Transvaal…"[39]

Unlike, for example, the Boers, who spoke of "white supremacy" but actually meant Afrikaner hegemony, Roosevelt was more sincere and less ethnically bound in evoking the notion of racial dominance. His thinking in this regard was stirred by his experience in Kenya.[40] Declaiming from the heights of Mount Kenya, TR was happy to report that "all the English officials and the setters have been most kind. The day is past," he exhorted, "when an American was regarded as a poor relation; and," he added, "if we remain self-reliant and powerful it will never return." Like a presidential candidate measuring for new drapes in the White House before the election occurs, TR was already "interested to see how extensive American influence is and in how many directions it is felt." And the news was not all bad. "Among the novels I see in the houses, no English ones are more common than for instance, David Harum, or Winston Churchill—I mean, of course, our Winston Churchill…" TR could be enthusiastic about Kenya as he could foresee a time when his nation's influence—which was closer to the settler

experience and the expropriation of indigenes than that of Britain—was pervasive. "When we dined with the officers of the local regiment and they played and sang," he observed, "I found that they had no knowledge of 'Gary Owen' but they all knew 'Marching Through Georgia', 'John Brown's Body' and 'Hampton Racetrack.'" One hunter he met who was Australian was "fond of books; Oliver Wendell Holmes, Bret Harte and Mark Twain are evidently those that he has read as his favorites."[41] Now TR may only have been seeing what he was seeking. It is difficult to imagine that, say, G.K. Chesterton's books would not be represented in Kenya. Still, his overall point about the rise of U.S. influence in East Africa could not be easily dismissed.

For what was occurring between London and Washington was a delicate minuet, whereby the former came to rely on the latter—at least in Africa (jousting continued between the two elsewhere, particularly in the Pacific and Latin America)—while the United States used this protective shield to sink roots of its own, that would eventually sprout as the overstretched Empire began to weaken. Washington was trying to provide London with a warm embrace with one hand, while picking its pocket with the other—something that had not escaped the attention wholly of Great Britain,[42] though the United States at times seemed to think otherwise.[43] In sum, TR repeatedly compared the construction of colonialism in East Africa to the experience of early British North America,[44] as his florid panegyrics repeatedly hailed the value of Colonial Kenya.

He sought to enlist the leading tycoon of his era, requesting that Andrew Carnegie donate to his cause. TR's was the first systematic and comprehensive investigation of the fauna and flora of the era and as a result, returning to the United States was probably the most complete collection of East African flora and fauna in the world. Suitably impressed, Carnegie donated $30,000 making him the largest contributor to this venture, exceeding that of Jacob Schiff, Elihu Root, John Hammand—and TR himself.[45]

Such donations also cemented the notion that the U.S. elite had an interest in following—perhaps shaping—events in Colonial Kenya. Few could fail to be impressed with the heights to which their compatriot, Sir Northrup, had ascended in East Africa. When he passed away in 1925, his wish to be buried at the summit of Ol Donyo Sabuk was unfulfilled. A metaphor for his Falstaff-like existence of excess was the fact that his weight was so formidable that his pallbearers could not ascend to the top and, thus, buried him along the way.[46]

He left behind a Herculean estate fight, as the colonial authorities had difficulty in ascertaining whether the man who may have been the leading resident of Kenya was actually a U.S. national or British subject,[47] yet another metaphor symbolizing the complicated paternity of the colony. The Nairobi authorities were nervous about this. In death as in life, Sir Northrup was continuing to roil the waters of Kenya.[48] After various palpitations and an "urgent enquiry by His Excellency the Governor," the colonial authorities "could not reconcile the opinion" that "the deceased never lost his American domicile…"[49] This was no tiny matter since the colony recognized the "great uneasiness" that was "being caused in financial circles in London and here" about this estate's disposition. This could inflict "great damage" on the "investment position" in Kenya; "this is not

a matter of finicking [*sic*] about" with legal opinions insisted the influential Lord Delamere—"it is a vital question of the credit of the Colony as a place for investment," particularly from trans-Atlantic sources.[50] If he were determined to be a British subject, the estate could be taxed substantially by London and Nairobi but if he were a U.S. citizen, this would not obtain. The easy answer would point to his British parentage but that could possibly deter potential investors, especially from the United States.[51] In the event, this complex story ended in tears in that fifteen years after her spouse's death, Lady Lucie was being instructed that "the high grass and undergrowth at present on your plot is very liable to harbour mosquitoes and become a possible source of disease,"[52] as a once luxurious estate was slowly being reclaimed by the wilderness.

Though Lady Lucie, originally of Massachusetts, seemed to be living out her life as a kind of Miss Haversham, straight from the pages of a Dickens novel, European settlers had reason to celebrate her late spouse. She passed away more than three decades after the death of Sir Northrup, but the East African European Pioneers Society, that morally enfeebled group of early settlers and their descendants, acknowledged that "both will long be remembered for their many generous gifts to the Colony;" for example, the "Louise Decker Home for aged Europeans with small means" was a recipient of their largesse, just as a "peak on Mt. Kenya also bears his name."[53] The couple—who produced no children—were important benefactors of the colony, financing the building of the YMCA, the Scott Sanatorium, and the McMillan Library among other facilities.[54]

But ironically as Sir Northrup and Lady McMillan were passing from center stage in the colony, another act in this ongoing drama was unfolding. It was in early 1922 that Marcus Mosiah Garvey, the Jamaica-born crusader for redemption of Africa, lashed out at the authorities in colonial Kenya in "protest against the brutal matter in which your government has treated the natives of Kenya East Africa. You have shot down defenseless people…" This demarche may have been prompted by a letter sent to Garvey by Harry Thuku, born in Kenya in 1895 who was at the center of one of the early revolts against settler colonialism. "I have today addressed a communication to the Secretary of the Negro Association of the United States of America for advice and help," he informed the Young Buganda Association in September 1921.[55] Reputedly, Jomo Kenyatta informed the Trinidadian writer, C.L.R. James, that it was in "1921 [that] Kenya nationalists unable to read would gather around a reader of Garvey's newspaper," and "listen to an article two or three times. Then they would run various ways through the forest, carefully repeating the whole, which they had memorized, to Africans hungry for some doctrine which lifted them from the servile consciousness in which Africans lived.'"[56]

Thuku stressed that he "cooperated very closely with the AIM…" He also collaborated with the "Gospel Missionaries from the Northern States of America, while the AIM seemed to come from the South" since they "would not discuss any matter of policy with Africans…" But the real turning point for Africans, as he saw it, was the Great War: "there were thousands of porters who came back from very difficult conditions in the East African campaign and found that they would not get any gratuity. Instead the government…decided that the white soldiers, and especially the officers, should be rewarded."[57]

The Thuku-led revolt[58] set in motion forces that were to culminate in independence forty-odd years later and, notably, elements from the United States were implicated in this process. Though racial bravado instructed otherwise, the colonialists realized that constructing white supremacy on the continent of Africa was inherently risky, with constant worries of spillover from other areas of unrest, for example, during the mass uprising that rocked Nyasaland years before Thuku's protest.[59] Strikingly, U.S.-based missionaries were a factor in this revolutionary process—and not just in their influence on men like Thuku—insofar as they played a role in the dispossession of the land of the Africans[60] and general maltreatment of them[61] and insofar as their presence argued for a stiff challenge to those who abjured Christianity, (a considerable number)[62] and a like challenge to various local mores.[63] At times, these missionaries were accused of the opposite: counseling subversion.[64]

A telling incident occurred in 1914—just after commencement of the Great War when nerves were frazzled—when the colonial official with U.S. roots, H.H. Horne, was issuing dire warnings about the presence of the U.S.-founded religious movement, the Seventh Day Adventists.[65] Likewise, Theodore Roosevelt, whose journey to Kenya helped to place this nation in the North American spotlight, left another legacy when in 1915 Muhammad Juma arrived in the United States. His father, Juma Yohari, had worked for the portly politician during his visit. Apparently in appreciation of his services, the President promised to help his son attend Tuskegee. His being educated was not exactly welcomed by the settlers who felt that such learning ill-disposed Africans to continue in their assigned roles as hewers of wood and drawers of water. Hence, the perceived menace these Africans were exposed to in the supposed radical groves of academe in the United States at the behest of Pan-Africanists and African Americans alike was one reason for the establishment of institutions of higher education in the region, where—presumably—one could keep a close and wary eye on the indigenes.[66]

Nonetheless, London's apprehension about the education that Africans might receive in the United States and the ties that might be forged with African Americans continued—notably after the Thuku revolt. Robert Coryndon, the Governor of Uganda, informed the Colonial Office in May 1922 that applications for passports were being received from some of the more prominent and affluent indigenes who wished to study abroad. He sought to refuse travel documents that would allow residence in the U.S. South—headquarters of most of the Black Colleges and Universities—and London concurred.[67]

Also indicative of this North American influence was the fact that a man who symbolized the later upsurge—Tom Mboya—was born on Sir Northrup's sisal estate at Ol Donyo Sabuk,[68] thus closing a circle that had begun when European settlers began to descend in droves on what became British East Africa.

2

A British Colony?

The colony of Kenya seemed worlds away from the United States but from its inception one could travel there by ship from New York in about five weeks.[1] Though they were a bedraggled and persecuted minority, it was not long before African Americans began to follow in the footsteps of Theodore Roosevelt and others from their erstwhile homeland made the long trek across the Atlantic—though unlike their Euro-American counterparts, they faced insuperable barriers when seeking to land at Mombasa.

As the twentieth century was approaching, Booker T. Washington—the U.S. Negro leader—lamented that "Great Britain controls the most part of the Dark Continent," and, thus, he cried, "there is no place in Africa for us to go where our condition could be improved." Yes, he went on, "all Europe, especially England, France and Germany, have been running a mad race during the last twenty years, to see which could gobble up the greater part of Africa and there is practically nothing left…" But there was a glimmer of hope: "if we are to go to Africa, and be under the control of another government," said the Wizard of Tuskegee, "I would think we would prefer to take our chances in the 'sphere of influence' of the United States."[2]

Washington's antagonist, W.E.B. Du Bois, also took an early interest in the region. Driven to lyricism, he spoke of it as "that great roof of the African world where beneath the silver heads of the Mountains of the Moon, came down in ancient days those waters and races which founded Egypt." But then came the Fall when "following the lead of South Africa," European settlers "took over five million acres of the best lands from the 3,000,000 natives, herded them gradually toward the swamps" and "suddenly a great race conflict swept East Africa…" Hence, as early as 1924, Du Bois had posited Kenya as a linchpin for the entire Pan-African world.[3]

It was during that era that Du Bois was busily organizing Pan African Congresses, seeking to intervene in what the colonizers deemed internal affairs concerning their colonies in Africa.[4] So inspired, some U.S. Negroes demanded a hand—along with indigenes—in administering a defeated Germany's African colonies.[5]

Given the influence wielded by Washington and Du Bois among U.S. Negroes, it was logical that African Americans would soon be sailing to Kenya. One among

this pioneer group of sojourners was Max Yergan, who later was to attract notoriety, first as a leader of the Communist-influenced Council on African Affairs, then—after a well-publicized apostasy—as a tribune of anticommunist conservatism. Born James Max Yergan in Raleigh, North Carolina in 1892, he graduated from Shaw University in 1914 where he studied sociology and modern languages.[6] The bulky Yergan, a stout 190 pounds on a 5-feet-9-inch frame, was the color of mocha with black hair, progressively graying as it was disappearing, and brown eyes; he was a young man of ambition.[7] Soon thereafter he joined the staff of the YMCA—Young Men's Christian Association—and shortly thereafter found himself in Mombasa, as the Great War was raging. "There were few motor trucks then," he recollected later, speaking of the colony's primary port, "and I recall the many heavily-laden carts and hand trucks that were being drawn and pushed through the crowded streets by thin, hard-muscled sweating Africans." Like TR before him, he too was reminded of the United States, albeit in a different manner. "The rhythm of their work songs and the intense, unbroken tempo of their labor," he observed of the indigenes, "brought back memories of Negro road gangs in North Carolina…"[8]

Yergan accompanied African troops and military laborers in the region and made a distinct impression.[9] He returned to the United States where he began addressing large student audiences at predominantly black colleges including Booker T. Washington's Tuskegee, Talladega, and others, where he vividly described his experiences, bringing first-hand accounts of colonialism in Africa.[10]

Why should the colony open its door for entrance of perceptive African Americans who could inspire Africans to revolt or return home and sound a clarion against white supremacy in Africa? The scholar, P. Godfrey Okoth, has argued that London "refused to allow [Yergan] to return" since the "administration did not wish to have well-educated black Americans work in the colony," while the head of the "Foreign Missions Conference of North America also discouraged the societies from sending black missionaries to Kenya…"[11]

Increasingly, it was Kenya that was coming to mind when the continent was contemplated, particularly by African Americans—which was not necessarily good news for London. Hence, the leading African American scholar, Charles S. Johnson, chose to target this colony when he spoke eloquently of the "*forced labor*" deployed by the colonizer to "enhance the production of cotton and other raw materials necessary to Great Britain's economy."[12] [emphasis-original] This accusation resonated in a land where those of African descent had been compelled to labor for centuries in order to bring untold wealth to Europeans.

However, the last thing London craved was an inundation of inquiring African Americans declaiming about damning parallels between their plight and those of Africans. Not long thereafter in a petition to the soon-to-be moribund League of Nations, Marcus Garvey's Universal Negro Improvement Association (UNIA) referenced Kenya when it complained bitterly that "it is almost impossible for an intelligent Negro to land in South Africa or other parts of the Continent, yet any white settler from any part of the world who seeks an entry is welcomed. This is unfair," it was stated bluntly.[13] "I entirely agree with the Secretary of State's

opinion," said the Colonial Office in response, "that the petition should not be laid before His Majesty and therefore that no notice should be taken of it."[14] Though there were notable exceptions, virtually until independence in 1963 it was difficult—at best—for African Americans and those from the Diaspora generally to gain entry to Kenya.

Yet London did not altogether ignore U.S. Negroes, for apparently it had made the calculation that their antagonists—the recalcitrant Dixiecrats—would be a reliable ally in constructing racist colonialism in East Africa, not least because of common concerns about oppression of those of African descent. As colonialism was being launched in East Africa, a British emissary was making a "confidential" report on the plight of U.S. Negroes in the Deep South. London, it was thought, should consider the impact on the "recent foreign policy of the United States" of the sharp turn toward disenfranchisement—and degradation—that had afflicted African Americans of late. Wilmington, North Carolina, where a coup d'etat only recently had dislodged U.S. Negroes from power, was seen as a sign of things to come and, similarly, would predispose the victors to white supremacy in Kenya. African Americans were viewed in the same light as colonized subjects; "no doubt," it was said in a prelude to condemnation, "many full-grown Negroes are men of remarkably quick intelligence" but "this quickness, like the wonderful memory which characterizes many Hindus, is not accompanied by what we should consider a normal development of other mental and moral faculties."[15]

At the same time the renowned and notorious racist, Earnest Sevier Cox drew from experiences in Africa in order to justify bigotry targeting African Americans. A native of Tennessee and an alumnus of Vanderbilt and the University of Chicago,[16] he undertook in 1912 a Cape to Cairo journey. His articulated purpose was to compare colonized Africans with African Americans.[17] This racial expedition helped to convince him that colonialism and Jim Crow were not only justified—but linked. That he learned Swahili was indicative of how deeply his East African experience influenced his thinking.[18] At the same time, Cox had taken careful note of the opinion of his fellow racist theorizer, Lothrop Stoddard, who in 1920 concluded that "after unprecedented rise, [the] white race reached [the] zenith of its power in 1900; then through growing materialism began swift decline, first indicated by Japan's victory over [the] Russians" in 1905.[19] Yet this racial anxiety did not necessarily portend well for Africans but, instead, meant further exploitation of them in order to steel and prepare for the presumed final conflict with Asia.

This common racialism and the fact that the Jim Crow United States continued to contain one of the largest repositories of those of "pure European descent" meant that the colony of Kenya would continue to be seen as akin to a joint London-Washington project. Henry Stanley, dispatched from the United States to find David Livingstone, also tried to interest friends and investors in financing an "American East African Company." The scholar, W. Alphaeus Hunton, argues that "he wanted to buy up land in the area which the British were soon to stake off and call Kenya…" That he was of British origin but fought as a Confederate in the U.S. Civil War was suggestive of the orientation of a number of Europeans who made their way to East Africa.[20]

Thus, despite their express disdain for U.S. Negroes, at the same time that the UNIA was carping about being barred from Mombasa and Nairobi, London was viewing "Negro Schools in the Southern States" to be of "very considerable value in connexion [*sic*] with the development of native education among the large Negro population of the British Empire;" these schools, it was thought, "would be of great assistance to Directors of Education and missionary bodies in Tropical Africa…"[21] Hence, the Jeanes Fund of the United States, which was instrumental in the first few decades of the twentieth century in cooperating with public school boards and superintendents of fourteen states in supervising teachers in Negro Rural Schools, soon was executing a similar task in Kenya. By the early 1930s, it was reported that a school in Kabete was being administered with Jeanes support and that of the Carnegie Foundation. There plays were done celebrating the life of the pro-colonialist explorer, David Livingstone, along with an African version of the Pied Piper of Hamelin—with no evident acknowledgment that Africans, likewise and subversively, might see themselves as being mesmerized manipulatively.[22]

This simultaneous disdain for U.S. Negroes in the colony while drawing upon models that involved them to resolve potent problems is not as contradictory as it seems at first glance. It reflected the reality that a grossly outnumbered settler class had to rely upon Africans with a modicum of numeracy and literacy. It also reflected the continuing and persistent influence of Euro-Americans in this British colony. It was not just Sir Northrup. Michael Blundell, a crucial leader of Kenya during the ill-fated "State of Emergency, " has recalled one of his neighbors, a "very short individual who had been a prune farmer in California, fought in the 1914–1918 war and settled in Kenya. By the standards of the day he farmed a smallholding, about one hundred and sixty acres, but he was pugnacious and self-important." As was often the case about these U.S. migrants, they brought skills to the colonial project that were difficult to duplicate. "He taught me a lot about the management of oxen," Blundell recollected fondly, "and I can hear him whispering in my ear at an auction 'Daun't tootch 'em, Michael, poor as deadly crows.' "[23]

Men of varying qualities were making their way from the United States to the colony. This growing list included a dentist, Grice Joseph, a physician—"Dr. Bower"—and another medical graduate that had served the crown as a "Surgeon in the Royal Naval War transport vessels…"[24] These U.S. nationals may have felt right at home in Kenya. Speaking from there in the 1930s, Bailey Willis observed that "the native has not yet become a competitor to a serious degree" with the settlers. "The question is: will he? And the answer is: unless degraded, exterminated he certainly will." Whereas in Uganda, "the good roads [are] built by native labor," in Kenya "the situation presents a sad contrast, but an instructive one. The whites are too few and too scattered to pay for road building. They can not work them. The blacks have no interest in the betterment of the community," he lamented. Overall, he was a pessimist, concluding that the "future of the white farmer in tropical Africa in competition with the vastly more numerous native population is not a good business risk. It is not probable that a self-supporting white community can be maintained."[25]

They kept coming nonetheless. There was W.G. Sewell who came from the United States to hunt and—like others before and after him-stayed to farm. Educated at Harvard, this Bostonian decided to settle at Njoro. Billy Sewell had more experience than most, having visited Canada, Mexico, Alaska, Ceylon, India, Burma, China, Japan, Labrador, and Newfoundland before becoming a neighbor of Sir Northrup. Suggestive of his resultant cosmopolitanism is his subsequent notoriety in Kenya for hiring Chinese servants.

Then there was the leader of the Plateau Maize Growers Association, known simply as "American Johnson," who brought more than a hint of the Wild West to the otherwise somnolent hills of Turbo. He had come from the Klondike in 1910, not long after a Gold Rush that had decimated indigenes, together with his compatriot, Harvey J. Anderson. Reputedly the dour and taciturn Johnson—accompanied by his similarly dreary spouse, Fanny—had abandoned Alaska in an excess of haste as a result of a disputed gambling debt. His questionable background did not disqualify him in Kenya, which was quickly gaining a reputation for attracting such types. Rather tall, like Sir Northrup, he had badly fitting dentures that may have contributed to his overall dourness and provided him with a clamped-jaw appearance and a strangely jutting chin that made him resemble a cartoon character. His spouse was tough and skinny with untidy and untamed wispy hair. Plowing 1200 acres that once had belonged to Africans, he invested heavily in the production of maize. But even those without U.S. roots who invested in the other common crop—sisal—were indebted to this former North American colony in that the Germans had brought it from Florida in 1893.

Johnson may have been personally unpleasant but—unlike some other U.S. nationals—he apparently did not have a hand in another Kenyan dispossession, that is, that of wildlife. For it was in the early aftermath of the Great War that a process was discovered in the United States for tanning zebra hides, which then became saleable instead of worthless, as had been the case previously. This helped to doom numerous zebras. Tens of thousands were slaughtered, then the kongoni, eland, giraffe, wildebeest, and gazelle all paid a similar price. Kenya's attraction to the United States was also grounded in the fact that, like this colony, North America had endured a recent process of routing indigenes and wildlife alike as farming took root. It was easier and more practicable for Kenyan farmers to get agricultural aid and advice from the United States than, say, the colonial master in London, thus further converting the colony into something of a joint project with Washington.[26]

Like U.S. farmers, those in Kenya enjoyed sizeable subsidies. The mealy-bug was once common in the citrus groves of California before scientists evolved a method of biological control involving ladybirds. But, as it turned out, when this insect was released on plantations in Kenya, they proved rather disappointing—not the first time that the colonists had over-estimated the potency of U.S.-based solutions.[27]

Though early in the colony's history there were men and women hailing from Great Britain, South Africa, Australia, Canada, New Zealand, Germany, and Rumania, those from the United States continued to wield outsized influence. Thus, the gifts deemed to be lavish that were bestowed upon indigenes by wealthy

visiting Euro-Americans led—according to one account—numerous servants to boycott any without roots in the land of George Washington. It was those from the United States who set the pace for the increasingly popular safaris that came to dominate the scene in Kenya from September to March. When H.K. Binns of the Empire encountered them, the surprise was mutual. "They thought all Britishers were long-bearded, fungus-brained, antique back-numbers and I was of the opinion," he said, "that Americans were all very wealthy oil kings," for that is how it seemed. "Undoubtedly they were great showmen," he thought; "in fact, they were great big boys. No gloomy creases disfigured their brows—everything was play. The world markets, big railway engineering works, big factories, it was all the same—play. They even regarded coming into the First World War as a recreation," he added ruefully, which must have seemed that way since two of their chief rivals—London and Berlin—were wounded severely.

What had brought the bright glare of publicity, in any case, to an otherwise obscure corner of Africa was the extended visit of a former U.S. president. Binns, a critic of Washington, concedes that Roosevelt's arrival "was an excellent advertisement for the attractions of the country. Wherever Teddy went, the tourists and adventurers followed…"[28] Soon the firm of Newland Tarlton, which organized safaris and expeditions became world famous and the largest employer in the colony.[29]

Inexorably, the economy of Kenya was being driven by safaris taken by affluent Euro-Americans. The young Ernest Hemingway, growing up in Oak Park, Illinois watched the jerky motion pictures of the TR expedition on the silent screen and followed it in magazines. Later, he was to give one of his prime characters in one of his celebrated novels—Jake Barnes—the dream of hunting in East Africa: a dream that also captured the imagination of many men globally, thanks to TR. Thus, when Hemingway arrived there finally in the 1930s he requested the services of Philip Percival who had helped to organize TR's hunting forays.[30]

This discernible influence of the United States was evident in Kenya even as the State of Emergency approached. The celebrated U.S. writer, Negley Farson, discovered this after his arrival as the second half of the twentieth century began to unfold. There were "four men in Kenya," he argued, "who are unquestionably the prime movers of the colony…" Of these, perhaps preeminent was Sir Alfred Vincent, who previously had led the opposition in the Legislative Council. The heavy-set, prematurely gray entrepreneur, was well known in the top business circles of New York, Chicago, Akron and Detroit, controlling the local agency for Detroit's General Motors; he was also the agent for twenty other big U.S. concerns, among which were Bendix Corporation, Stewart Warner, American Bosch, Bosch Fuel Equipment, Zenith Radio, United States Asbestos, and American Steel Export Co. The busy Sir Alfred was also a frequent visitor to the United States where he knitted the personal ties that underpinned his extensive businesses. That he was born in South Africa cemented his importance in shaping the Transatlantic subordination of Africans. The governor at that time, Sir Philip Mitchell, spent two years fighting shoulder-to-shoulder with U.S. forces in the war against Japan.[31]

Apparently Farson did not encounter during his trip to Kenya Lord Carberry, whose hotel—Eden Rock—was well-named for his sybaritic life was based on the accumulated "rocks" of bootlegging during the Prohibition Era in the United States and other dubious adventures; his nasal drawl, quite appropriately, reflected both Eton and Los Angeles. During that time, the highly regarded Irish Catholic Secondary School at Mangu featured Father Mackie, widely known as the "Singing Priest" due to his duets on radio in California with Bing Crosby. The Mawingo Hotel in Nanyuki had initially been a private house built as an emotional snare for an elusive Belgian, Gabriel Prudhomme, by his scandalously wealthy North American spouse.[32] The luxurious dwelling of the Baron and Baroness Prudhomme—according to a U.S. emissary—"provided the background for many gay parties which were enlivened by the comings and goings of voluptuous French, Egyptian and other Mediterranean ladies of easy virtue."[33]

Mrs. Prudhomme was not unusual to the extent that from about 1870 to 1914, 454 women from the United States married titled Europeans or their sons; this was not only a bid for status but it was also a wealth transfer from the United States particularly to the United Kingdom that helped to forge the blossoming Anglo-American alliance and broaden the basis of support for colonialism.[34]

Sir Michael Blundell, a colonial official from this period, had a good friend, Denzil Meares, who was married to a beautiful woman from Rapid City, South Dakota. She was "tall and languorous with Titian hair and a fabulous complexion," he recalled fondly. "My future wife, universally known as Gerry, shared a house with her. Alicia, Denzil's wife" had a "soft American drawl," he observed. Sir Michael's bodyguard during the height of the 1950s conflict when—as he put it—he was a "target for assassination" had not only served beside him in the war against Japan but, previously, had also been a "G man in Chicago and a crack shot. I have seen him put five shots from a .45 Colt revolver through a falling cigarette tin in as many seconds…" Remembering these days warmly, he noted, "he taught me how to shoot a Japanese intruder sideways on while I was sitting at a table in the jungle without turning my head," a fungible skill easily transferred to the shooting of Africans.[35] Sir Michael was evidently impressed with this man, "'Davo' Davidson," since he referred to him repeatedly. Like so many close Anglo-American relationships, theirs had been forged in the fire of the war against Japan; Davidson "had been Regimental Sergeant-Major in my battalion in Southeast Asia," recalled Sir Michael. It was while they were in Ceylon that he taught his charge how "to sit quietly at my desk with a pistol ready to my right. Suddenly at a shout I had to pick up the pistol, fire at the dummy of a Japanese entering the orderly room, hit it dead centre with the minimum of aim, and continue with my reading or writing. His hands were like silk," he said almost erotically, "and he would be continually fingering and practicing with his weapons. He never played cards, because his fingers were so sensitive that he could detect the infinitesimal graduations of shape and colour on the card, even [if] he could not see it. I have seen him," he continued with fascination, "time after time, feeling and running his fingers over the aces, kings and queens, with their faces turned down, while he would declare almost unerringly the exact value of the card. On our travels," during the State of Emergency, "we would proceed thus.

I would drive and Davo would sit firmly on the rear seat with his two Colts on his knees expectant like a gigantic terrier. A sudden cry and I had to pull my own pistol out and fire at some indicated target," typically an African.[36]

But the footloose Yankees, who unlike many other migrants to Kenya were not sworn to uphold the Empire, presented particular problems for London, though the United States had the distinct advantage of possessing the deepest reservoir of those who could bolster white supremacy in Africa. Establishing a settler presence in East Africa was neither easy nor simple, given often hostile indigenes, a dearth of amenities—unless one had the Croesus-type wealth of Sir Northrup—and loneliness. Every hearty settler bolstered the colonial project—especially since abandoning Kenya in the early days was not unknown.[37] Such an inhospitable environment often pushed settlers over the edge, leading to imprisonment for various offenses, thereby effectively reducing their numbers—and heightening the importance of the United States.[38]

Sir Charles Dundas, a comrade of Winston Churchill, was struck in Kenya by the presence of "men of good British stock [who] could be seen going about in disarray so extreme as to be patently studied and their habits, if not their minds, were as untidy as their dress…" Like a swamp tended to breed mosquitoes, the colony based as it was on outré notions of racial supremacy tended to generate bizarre behavior. Thus, Sir Charles "had to deal firmly with the scion of a good English family who peppered his native servant with shot so that his back was studded with pellets. His plea was one that surely would not be heard outside a Kenya court—the black villain had given him bad cream with his apple dumpling!" Yes, he concluded wearily, "undoubtedly Kenya attracted individuals of a temperamental type, but I have always believed that many were strangely affected by altitude. In this respect there was marked contrast between the coast and the highlands."[39]

The thin air of the Highlands aside, there were those of disputable character, "white" flotsam and jetsam rejected by the powers, who often seemed to float into coastal Mombasa.[40] The famed writer, Evelyn Waugh, denied that the settlers were comprised of "rapacious adventurers": others disagreed.[41] Their presence also tended to magnify the importance of attracting upstanding settlers, with the potential pool in the United States simply being larger than Great Britain's. Boers and Germans, both of whom hailed from nations that had borne arms against His Majesty, were not necessarily favored as settlers, which also heightened the importance of U.S. nationals.[42] Then when in a rare instance a European woman married a man who was not, this effectively ostracized her—if not worse—and increased the need for another of her "race" to replace her.[43]

The fear of miscegenation in this instance was roughly equivalent to a fear of South Asians, who had migrated to the colony in significant numbers early on. Waugh captured the sentiments of many of his compatriots when he expressed apprehension about the presence of Indians in the colony, concluding that "no Arab or European can compete with them…because they can subsist on a standard of living as low as the natives…" Stunned by their growing numbers as the Great Depression began to bite, he added with a dollop of sarcasm that "we came to establish a Christian civilization and we have come very near to establishing a

Hindu one…" Yet, despite these grave reservations, he was "falling in love with Kenya." In Kenya, he opined in an ironically intended compliment, "it is easy to forget that one is in Africa…" Yet his affection for the place and his apprehension about the perceived growth of the Indian population, virtually cried out for an increased flow of European migrants, who perforce would come from the United States. Waugh was also struck by the "large number of bachelor farmers"—it was "one of the surprising things about Kenya"—and unless these men were to cross the color line in order to produce families, more European women had to land at Mombasa.[44]

Moreover, the United States had the benefit of avoiding damage to its industrial plant during the Great War and, thus, was poised to benefit as newer products and technologies spread. Ford trucks and cars quickly gained a firm foothold in the colony, for example.[45] The man who became Sir Michael Blundell—and a key colonist—recalled that John Deere tractors from the United States were quite prominent in East Africa.[46] Higher education—colleges and universities—was rapidly becoming more extensive in the United States than the United Kingdom, so it was inevitable that as early as 1921, the University of Illinois would gain a toehold in Kenya.[47] In any case, it was TR's expedition that had brought the spotlight on the colony in the first place, burning it into consciousness globally.

The problem for London was not simply the debatable question as to whether these U.S. nationals would swear allegiance to His Majesty during pressure-packed moments, it was also the very definition of what constituted a U.S. national. Since "whiteness" in the United States—the highest stage of citizenship—was not inflexibly bound ethnically, it was possible for London's sworn enemies to disguise themselves as devotees of Washington, though maintaining a different fealty. Thus, in the aftermath of the Great War a colonial intelligence officer became quite concerned about Otto Keller, who supposedly was tied to the "American Mission" in "Itigi Kondo Irangi District" but was "suspected of pro-German sympathies." Apparently, he was "an American of Swiss-German parentage" and was "pro-German at the beginning of the war but changed round when America came in [to the conflict]" and became "strongly pro-Ally."[48]

Though certain colonial elites may have had a problem with Washington, in the aftermath of the war as the U.S. profile was burnished with the spread of its movies and cultural influences generally, the popularity of this former British colony increased decidedly. Reflecting on these heady times, the Kenyan writer Elspeth Huxley—who was born in Britain—recalled that "everybody, at that time, wanted to go to America. It was a magnet, a lodestar, a beacon. Everything that was new, peculiar and exciting came out of the West. This belief had been created largely by the cinema…" She wound up studying at Cornell University and confessed, "I wanted to stay in America because it was easier to get on." Yet all was not sweetness and light since—on her westward-bound ship—"a steward I got talking to said that he hated Americans so much, and so did all the other stewards, that they had frequent 'dust-ups' in New York, or sometimes Southampton, with Yankee stewards whose only crime was not to be British…" Pondering the spectacle of it all, she concluded, "it was a wonder they were not lynched…" One reason for this corrosive resentment was material: "there was a

lot of sensitiveness," she observed, "about the debt; the sums we had borrowed from them had been on prosecuting the war to make the world safe for democracy…" She could not help but notice that "in cartoons, Uncle Sam was always depicted sitting on a moneybag or with a dollar sign…"[49]

But the relative strength of the U.S. economy and the potency of the popular culture and higher education there were not the only factors that made Washington so attractive to many settlers. It was also the fact that the United States as a settler colony itself was closer in temperament and culture to Colonial Kenya. Huxley found ridiculous objections that were raised to the idea of a settler colony. This "theory—that land belonged exclusively to the people already here, however sporadic their occupation or inadequate their husbandry—could be pursued to a *Reduction ad absurdum*. Should the whole continent of North America," she asserted triumphantly, "have been left to the two or three million natives who roamed it—New York and San Francisco, Chicago and Montreal, forever unbuilt?"[50] [emphasis original] Her fellow wordsmith, Evelyn Waugh, bolstered her bold assertion, adding with equal vigor, "have the Nilotic immigrant tribes any more 'right' of East Africa than the British?"[51] For her part, Huxley saw a further parallel between the former British colony (the United States) and the then current one (Kenya). "East Africa may give more trouble than any of the other forty-six scattered bits of colonial Empire," she averred; "although the white population is far too small, the black masses far too large, for self-government to be anywhere within reach, that does not prevent the same policies which stung America to revolt a century and a half ago," she observed in the 1930s, "from jangling East Africa's nerves today."[52] Similarly indicative of the parallels shown by the former British North America and the then British East Africa was that the latter turned to Washington—overseer of a similarly capacious land mass—when it came to seeking information concerning land development, specifically the "Homestead Act" and the "Desert Act," since Great Britain itself could provide little guidance here.[53]

It was not as if the colonizers were predisposed to kowtow to Washington, though given the growing reliance upon the United States, perhaps they should have considered doing so. Alice Gwnynne Preston, a U.S. national residing in the colony in the 1930s would have wished they had. She presided over a lush 285 acres near Lake Naivasha bequeathed to her by her late spouse, Jerome Preston that by 1937 was worth a sizeable 10,000 pounds. Her social status did not prevent her arrest by the authorities after she clashed with a settler known as "Captain Woodmore" who she had engaged to manage her property, providing him the use, as the authorities put it, of a "Chevrolet Motor Lorry," a "Buick car," and a "petrol allowance"—though she allegedly refused to pay him and this "woman of considerable means" was jailed.[54] The U.S. consul railed at this "high-handed" approach; worse, her "reputation was damaged inasmuch as the arrest was made in a public place in the presence of a great many people."[55] Though she possessed a lovely estate and house, she decided to leave the colony "for good"—"she is a person of means and I quite understand her indignation," said a local magistrate. Yet, he continued, "the state of feeling between her and Capt. Woodmore was such that I had the greatest difficulty in keeping order in

the Court throughout the day and I think that Mrs. Preston had only herself to thanks for the action taken."[56]

Unsurprisingly, given the growing U.S. influence in the region—and the problems attendant thereto as Mrs. Preston could well attest—Washington established a legation in the colony early on. And just as Washington had to explain repeatedly to European colonizers about the bona fides of Euro-Americans—were these actually German agents hiding behind the shroud of "whiteness?"—the State Department also had to explain (perhaps ineffectively in this case) that "African American" was not simply a kind of synecdoche for "subversive." Thus in the fall of 1925 U.S. consul in Nairobi, Avra Warren, found himself in a familiar position: reassuring Belgium's Consul for the region, (nervously worried about how his small nation could continue suzerainty over a gigantic Congo and avoid a presumed contagion from East Africa) that he had nothing to fear from Black Americans. Yes, conceded Warren, it was "obvious" that "there is a certain amount of restlessness among the Negroes of Uganda and Tanganyika Territory"—but, he insisted, "to trace a connection to American Negroes is far fetched and lacking in proof…" Didn't Brussels realize how effective their joint measures had been to keep African Americans as far away from colonized Africa as possible? Didn't Brussels realize that there were no "American Negroes resident in any of the East Africa colonies, nor have any entered any of the ports during the last 2 years?" Didn't Brussels realize further that "educated East African negroes have not traveled to the United States, nor to the best of the writer's knowledge corresponded with any 'uplift' society in North America?" Didn't Brussels recognize the unassailable "fact that no American negroes are to be found either in Uganda, Tanganyika, Kenya, Zanzibar, or, in so far as can be ascertained, in the Eastern Belgian Congo?"[57]

Yet Belgium's Consul, remained—in Warren's view—"obsessed" with a "conviction" that had "gained a measure of credence in Brussels and London" that "Communistic propaganda" was rife in their African colonies and the vector for transmission of this "doctrine of unrest" were none other than "American negroes."[58] London and Brussels found it hard to accept that opening the door to U.S. influence inevitably delivered images of "American Negroes" via movies and the like and though Washington did its racial duty by portraying this minority as inferior, the fact that African Americans could be seen as enjoying a style of life far above that of colonized Africans could serve to inspire the latter to struggle for a better life—to the detriment of colonialism.

Perhaps as a partial result, Washington's men in the region seemed to feel that they had to go to great lengths to demonstrate that they were not somehow soft on Africans or colonialism to the point where they might jeopardize the entire white supremacist project. The consul who preceded Warren, William Jenkins, warmly recounted a conversation he had had with the "Venerable Archdeacon of Kavirondo," a Mr. Owen, who had recently returned from a visit to the United States. This estimable man of the cloth had a conversation with officials at Tuskegee Institute of Alabama who felt that the effect of the education and training accorded to the American Negro was to make him "'unhappy'…" Now this was consistent with the parameters of European colonialism though his words

were the "subject of general adverse criticism by local Europeans" who deemed it all "both untimely and harmful in view of the great danger of misinterpretation and misunderstanding by the natives."[59] Why raise—in *any* way, even a negative way—education, it was thought in Nairobi. But the very existence of African Americans and their determined struggle for education and rights, ineluctably reached the shores of Kenya—to the dismay of the colonizers.

Some colonists found it suspicious and not accidental that the unrest sparked by Harry Thuku may have had a U.S. connection, through his ties to missionaries.[60] Settlers were justified in being suspicion of Thuku's ties to the United States, as he had requested aid and support from Tuskegee. East African patriots wanted Tuskegee to train their youth or, alternatively, found a similar institution in Kenya. Thuku not only corresponded with Marcus Garvey but read his works while imprisoned.[61] Jenkins chose not to hide the reality that Thuku, "attended the American Mission at Kambui, learned to read and write in Kikuyu, as well as some Swahili and English…" Yes, he conceded, there were "native riots" though he denied U.S. responsibility.[62] It was simple for the colonizers to blame Thuku on U.S. influence rather than colonialism itself. Even as this bloody incident was percolating, the African Inland Mission was complaining to U.S. secretary of state, Bainbridge Colby—who, like Sir Northrup, had St. Louis roots—about difficulty in gaining visas for their personnel. They had arrived in Kenya in 1896 and thought their lengthy tenure should have provided the requisite credibility; instead there was "continual delay"—"in some cases three years" of delay—in processing visa requests.[63]

This was not the only complaint emanating from the United States. London had been weakened as a result of the Great War and Washington emboldened, yet the former power was not willing to cede hegemony in Kenya—even a second bloodletting two decades later did not drive home this realization. U.S. consul Warren grumbled repetitively about trade barriers, "imperial preference" as opposed to the "Open Door" Washington desired. As of 1924 there was no direct steamer service, "either American or foreign" according to Warren, between East Africa and the United States—and this was the "chief bar to development of trade." U.S. exports to British East Africa had to be "transshipped either at Aden, Durban or Port Said and a long and expensive delay dissatisfies local importers who are driven in many cases to Great Britain and Germany for manufactures they would otherwise buy in the United States…" Exports to the United States—sisal, cloves, ivory, pencil cedar—suffered similar impediments. Thus, in a typical three-month period, stated exports to the United States from the region were a measly $216,000—but since the United States did not have Consuls in such key nodes as Mombasa, Dar es Salaam, and Zanzibar, the precise figures were hard to pin down.[64]

All news on the business front was not pessimistic. Consul Warren was gleeful about the "American monopoly" in the automobile trade of Nairobi; in 1924 there were "now 2000 automobiles in use" and the "European population of the colony" was "10,000"—outnumbered merely 1–200 by the Africans and Asians—suggesting room for further growth. Further, the chief import into the region was cotton goods, "a trade in which the United States shared very largely

before the war," he added with satisfaction. "Indeed," he added, "the trade name of a cheap gray cotton cloth most extensively sold to the Negro tribesmen is 'Americani.' Since the war, however, American export prices have been too high and the 'Americani' is now supplied from Japan…"[65]

There was also competition in the increasingly important petroleum business said Consul Warren, "between the British 'Shell' interests and one American manufacturer of gasoline or petrol…to obtain a dominant position in the supply of gasoline to the 4000 automobiles and trucks and the 2000 motorcycles that are in operation" in the region.[66]

Further grim news came from the banking sector. There was a self-perpetuating circle of stasis in that the small volume of U.S. exports and imports—and the preeminence of British banks—meant, as Consul Jenkins put it, "there is no good opening at the present for American banks. They are not discriminated against under local laws or regulations but, for some time to come, at least, it would not be a paying proposition for them."[67] Though much smaller in territory and population than the United States, Britain had a "first mover's advantage": it had planted the Union Jack in Kenya, established the rules and the growing giant that was the United States had to adjust accordingly. Increasingly colonies were being viewed as sources for petroleum—notably Kenya's neighbors across the Red Sea—and minerals and London was certainly loath to give ground in this strategic realm. Foggy Bottom raised strong objections—with little apparent effect—to London's laws that demanded that mining licenses were only to be granted to firms comprised entirely of British subjects.[68]

Thus, despite growing U.S. influence in British East Africa, it remained precisely that: a British colony. What helped to bind the two powers was their common antipathy to the darkest amongst them. In 1930, the leading settler, Lord Delamere, hailed "compulsory labor" and "segregation as the only alternative," along with the "colour bar," matters all that would have warmed the cockles of the average Dixiecrat. "Our whole feeling as a race," he insisted, "is to keep our standard up and to avoid being pulled down to a lower level" since "even Negrophiles and many respected missionaries feel that the Native is best kept out of the white man's politics"—a statement that would have received a loud amen in the region stretching from Richmond, Virginia, to Austin, Texas.[69] Correspondingly, U.S. influence regionally increased: the United States doubled its proportionate stake in the markets of Zanzibar by 29% during the period from 1920 to 1926.[70]

Still, the U.S. consul may not have been mistaken in his perception of discrimination: Charles Albrecht complained about the "anti-American editorials" he had begun to notice in mid-1928 and the "anti-American feeling on the part of government officials and others in British East Africa…"[71] Nonplussed, the *Tanganyika Times*, which targeted the European minority, stated bluntly that "were it possible to arrange a poll among the civilized nations of the world to decide which is the most unpopular country, there is not the slightest doubt that the USA would secure this dubious honor by a thumping majority…"[72]

Figure 2 Kenya Colony. Nairobi. McMillan Library and the Indian Mosque.
Source: Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-M31-8438].

The library that bears his name in Nairobi, is continuing evidence of Sir Northrup McMillan's own essential role in the evolution of colonialism in East Africa. The mosque that stands alongside this library is suggestive as well of the role of Islam in this colony—a religion that came to include paternal family members of a future U.S. president: Barack Obama.

3

A Dangerous Neighborhood

Kenya was a center of European and Euro-American influence in a region that was wracked increasingly by instability. Kenya shared a border with Ethiopia, virtually unique on the continent as an independent nation but eyed hungrily by Italy which longed to obtain its share of colonial plunder. Kenya shared a border with Tanganyika the subject of revenge-seeking, revanchist, and irredentist longings by Germany, which had not reconciled itself to losing this land to Britain as a result of the Great War. Kenya was within hailing distance of the nations that became Rwanda and Burundi, controlled by tiny and insecure Belgium, which was not above stoking ethnic—and potentially disastrous—tension to maintain its unsteady rule. As World War II approached, neither Rome nor Berlin neglected the notion of making gains in East Africa that could mean London's ouster altogether from the region. This served to prepare Kenya for the defensive reaction of an even closer embrace by the United States.

Moreover, from the beginnings of British colonialism in East Africa, a significant number of migrants from South Asia across the Indian Ocean migrated to Kenya.[1] In the long run, Kenya's most perilous border may have been the one to the east—the vast oceanic region that encompassed India and Japan. One British newspaper in Lahore had referred to East Africa as " 'the America of India,' " signaling how Indians would pour into Mombasa, akin to how Europeans poured into what became New York.[2] This nettlesome issue had not escaped the attention of the U.S. consul in Nairobi, William Jenkins, who as early as 1923 was evincing nervousness about Indian demands for the franchise: Jenkins was in accord with that "far-sighted and experienced statesman, General [Jan] Smuts" of profoundly racist South Africa, who objected to concessions to Indians. Jenkins expressed no objection to the idea that European settlers in Kenya were "determined to resist by force" if the status quo were altered materially; they were "prepared to seize the reins of Government," which was not unsettling to Jenkins who represented a nation born amidst a similar rebellion. "The basis of the white man's opposition," he declared, "is the law of self-preservation, the same law that undoubtedly would have long delayed our government in granting the franchise to the Negro had we been outnumbered or had been likely to be outnumbered by the Negroes in such a proportion." He added, "The strongest argument of all against the granting of

equal franchise to the Indians," indeed the "most essential fact of all," was the rudimentary question: "whose country is it anyhow is the crux of the whole matter" and, as he saw it, "there can be only one answer"—and that was certainly not majority rule nor enfranchisement of Indians.[3] In an uncommon reply to a report from the colony, the U.S. secretary of state complimented Jenkins for his "excellent" dispatch.[4]

Such compliments reinforced Jenkins' perceptions about the reputed danger of an influx of Indians to the colony and what this portended for Kenya's critical location as a gateway to the world of Islam, due north in the Sudan—the largest nation by territory on the beleaguered continent—and Egypt and across the sea in the land that contained both Mecca and Medina. "If in the future," said Jenkins, "there should unfortunately be a war between the Eastern and Western civilizations, or a religious war between the Mohammedan and Christian world the strategical [*sic*] value of Kenya, due both to its geographical situation and its abundant resources, would be of great importance."[5] But was not Kenya's strategic value being compromised by the steady migration of South Asian Muslims?

Signaling the importance of this migration was the rumor that the avatars of white supremacy in the Empire—the leaders of South Africa, Australia, and Canada—were slated to be present at a conference in London "regarding the Indian Question of Kenya Colony and that should the Home Government decide the Question in favor of the Indian, South Africa and Australia are prepared to aid the white settlers in Kenya," as the U.S. consul noted. Washington's man did not seem particularly perturbed by this insurrectionary threat.[6]

Inflamed rhetoric flowing like incendiary lava from the U.S. consul was also an indication of Washington's circling of London, keenly and eagerly waiting to swoop in and grab whatever tidbits of the Empire that an overstretched Britain could not hold. The "commercial potentialities of Africa are greater than those of India," announced Jenkins in 1929. "Great Britain will be unable to control both and therefore for purely commercial reasons alone, leaving aside the important racial necessity of preventing a peaceful penetration of Africa by the brown or yellow races, she should concentrate her efforts to preserving Africa as a white stronghold and courageously give up India…" And if London were to make a racial stand in Africa, then Kenya would be the headquarters of this since it was the "Thermopylae" of the continent, "the only real danger spot in Africa" and a locus of "Bolshevist intrigue among the Mohammedans of Africa…" Forwarded to Washington was a copy of a pamphlet penned by a leading settler and member of the Legislative Council—and secretary of the "Vigilance Council"—entitled simply, "The Thermopylae of Africa, Kenya Colony." A brutal philippic aimed at Indians particularly, this polemic relied heavily on the thinking of crude U.S. racial theorists, for example, Madison Grant and Lothrop Stoddard. The "Indian Question, looked at squarely, is the beginning of a conflict of Races [*sic*] for the final supremacy [on] a Continent…" From a certain viewpoint the Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 had been a staggering blow to white racial unity and the rise of Japan likewise did not augur well for continued domination by the North Atlantic powers—and this polemic did little to dispel this kind of thinking, concluding almost hysterically that the "White Race faces the grim struggle for

survival exhausted by the four years of the most devastating Civil War which the world has seen…"[7] This racial pessimism was not alleviated when a report emerged that Harry Thuku was said to have "traveled about the country in a car owned and driven by Indians…"[8]

Washington's value to the North Atlantic powers, inter alia, was the idea radiating from this capital that troublesome ethnic conflicts among those of European descent should be set aside in the name of racial unity. European settlers in Kenya had similar concerns about such matters, particularly when Imperial Japan began poking its nose into East African affairs in the 1920s and a flummoxed Nairobi had to decide how those who were clearly not European—and clearly not powerless—should be treated.[9]

Japan presented a formidable challenge to those with a stubborn belief in the reputed superiority of those of "pure European descent." The Colonial Office worried that Tokyo would "allege discrimination on racial grounds"[10]—though its unalloyed white supremacy did little to allay this real concern. London instructed Nairobi in December 1937 that "Japanese and British interests in the Far East are clearly conflicting"; this matter was stressed to the point that it was concluded—perhaps too dramatically—that "America and Russia can be ruled out; they just don't count in diplomacy…"[11] More to the point, Japan's cheap products—particularly textiles—were presenting a stiff challenge to London at the same time that the Great Depression was descending. Worst of all, there seemed no end in sight for this competition was "increasing in the most formidable way in East and West Africa and in the West Indies," potentially making a shambles of the very idea of Empire, which presupposed a close market to be feasted upon by the British. "I have been in Lancashire myself," London's man added with despair, "and I have never seen the trade so genuinely alarmed," as, sadly, "Japanese competition is in a class by itself…"[12]

Tokyo's strategy in the region was sufficient to give headaches to the gatherer of revenue for the Empire, who fretted that Japanese exports to East Africa targeted "the non-European and principally [the] native markets," which served to convince the alert that Japan might be making a specific appeal to the majority, as against the interest of an increasingly nervous minority, just as it had made an attempt to woo African Americans.[13]

The tax collector for the region moaned about "increasing monopolization of the East African market by Japan…"[14] Soon the press took up the cry—"Japanese Menace to Empire Trade" read one bold headline in an article deemed sufficiently important to be retained by the authorities. The "situation is farcical," fumed the writer. "India is virtually flooded with cotton and artificial silk goods," while "leading mills in Bombay were forced to close down." In "1928 Great Britain exported over three times as much as Japan," yet a scant four years later, "Japan exported over three times as much as Britain." Where was the equity? And what did this signify for the long-term health of the Empire? Why, "no British firm can quote prices even remotely competitive with the Japanese," it was said. "Ulterior motives" were "suspected" quite naturally—perhaps a long-term goal of creating its own Empire in place of that of the British. "This policy of ruthless underselling" it was contended, presented a "danger to which Western workpeople

[*sic*] are exposed."[15] Japan's rise and its blunt attempts to woo Africans, Indians and African Americans alike, was of grave concern in London and Washington alike—not to mention Moscow's ongoing effort to trod a path akin to Tokyo's.

As in the United States,[16] as a direct outgrowth of this anxiety, so-called racial science designed to demonstrate that Europeans were superior and Africans were inferior and, therefore, apartheid-like conditions were justifiable, found a receptive ear among the colonizers of Kenya[17]—with the funding and rationales often emerging from New York. Of course, the settler elites in Nairobi and New York hardly considered the impact their activities might have on the "colored" when Moscow and Tokyo were not necessarily singing from that particular hymn-book.

The settlers in Kenya were acutely conscious of their minority status, that they were surrounded by Africans in a dangerous neighborhood—but reassuring was the surging idea that these neighbors were inferior. Their counterparts in New York were living in the midst of an island, Manhattan, that had undergone profound change in recent decades as the population of African descent from the U.S. South and the West Indies migrated northward. This helped to convince these Kenya settlers that like their presumed predecessors, the Greeks at Thermopylae, a small group of Europeans could vanquish a larger group of Persians—or Africans.

Thus, as the third decade of the twentieth century approached, the eminent Dr. F.D. Keppel visited Nairobi funded by the philanthropy of Andrew Carnegie. His mission? "To determine the mental values of the natives of this part of the world," as his colonial interlocutor delicately put it. "As we are without standards, other than European," Dr. Keppel was informed, "it is important to find out first of all whether those standards are applicable for Africans," thus, it was "essential that a study of the intimate anatomy of the brains of the local native be made…" The cost? "8[,]700 [pounds] per annum for three years would be required," a bargain by any measure, it was thought. Dr. Keppel was likewise made "aware that there is a certain amount of evidence that the brains of some native races…are less developed than are Europeans in the areas intimately connected with mental attainments."[18]

In the interest of research, John Gilks of the Medical Department in Nairobi, who had a particular interest in the "cell content of the prefrontal cortex of East African natives," acknowledged that "far more work is necessary"—not to mention far more research dollars—"before we can have any idea as to the value of the mental equipment of our natives here."[19] This "question" had "been under consideration here for some time," Gilks asserted and the conclusion was that the "average mental capacity of the native is slightly lower than that of the Western European"; he was quick to add that "funds have been made available from the Rockefeller Foundation" for this "big research," perhaps spurring Carnegie's competitive juices.[20] Dr. Keppel too was intensely interested in a "study of the mental capacity of East African natives…."[21]

Dr. H.L. Gordon of Colonial Kenya found a "prevalence of a low degree of mentality" among the indigenes; owing to an alleged peculiarity of the brain, the "African differs mentally from the European," he averred, "not only in degree

but very definitely in kind"—which, needless to say, "opens up questions of the greatest importance…" For example, it seemed "quite possible that efforts to educate these backward races on European lines will prove ineffective and probably disastrous."[22]

The Eugenics Society of London was also decidedly interested in these investigations. Also joining Gilks in this appeal were an all-star team of the great and good of the Empire, including Julian Huxley, Lord Dawson, and Lord Hordar.[23] Lord Dawson took to the pages of the popular press to spread this message.[24]

Thus, Nairobi became a regional headquarters for–as the director of Medical and Sanitary Services in the colony put it—"anatomical research with regard to the African brain…"[25] The director, A.R. Patterson, stressed in his aggressive push for funding for this research that the authorities were quite concerned with "*the nature and causes of the condition called racial 'backwardness' and the best methods of obviating the causes, or remedying their results…*"[26] [emphasis-original] Colonial Kenya with assistance from their U.S. comrades was seeking to ascertain "the fundamental differences between the black and white races," with the operating premise being that the "biological heritage" was critical in explaining the former's supposed "'backwardness.'" This was not just a regional issue, it was thought: "as imperial interests are involved it is reasonable to suggest the burden should be borne imperially…" Consequently, the colonial authorities in Nairobi desired a "similar enquiry in the Sudan" and, perhaps, a "similar enquiry in, say, Northern Rhodesia or Nyasaland or both…"[27] One official indicated the potential global research of this inquiry by noting its potential application to South Africa—while invoking the iconic Booker T. Washington.[28] In response this enquiry received a ringing endorsement from the *South African Medical Journal* in Cape Town, along with the major press organ of Johannesburg. London was informed that such an investigation "would help to solve many of our administrative, educational, social and political problems"—though left unsaid was precisely how this would occur.[29]

For at that precise moment in the United States research began to unfold for which profuse apologies would be made six decades later, as medical authorities—unbeknownst to the African American male patients involved—left venereal disease untreated in a ghoulish experiment that mirrored past inhuman liberties taken with the health of this population.[30] Minimally, the so-called research then being conducted in Nairobi exposed a similar cavalier attitude toward the well-being of the indigenes. Strikingly, Dr. H.L. Gordon of Nairobi in his own study of syphilis—that paralleled what was then occurring in the United States—raised the "possibility that unchecked spirochaetal infection in the past may have been an environmental influence contributing to the present degree of cerebral deficiency found in the native…"[31]

However, like his colleagues in the region, Earnest Sevier Cox, the professional racist from the United States, agreed that "the Negro problem is a biological problem, that it is not a problem of environment but of race," which meant that "democracy can no more solve a race problem than can monarchy…." Thus, Cox was a firm backer of those who sought to oust the Negro from North America: "shame to white America that did not come to the assistance of Garvey!" he

bemoaned; "shame to the whites who bewail the necessity for a color line but supported not this great opportunity to be rid of it by giving the Negro a country of his own." His solution was to "transport black men to Africa," perhaps Kenya. The alternative was too ghastly to contemplate. The "color problem was settled by amalgamation in ancient India and in ancient Egypt" and "settled by separation of the races in Tasmania where the whites killed the blacks and in Hayti [*sic*] where the blacks killed the whites"—and it was only the latter that particularly bothered him.[32]

Still, these investigations of the alleged deficiencies of the African ultimately were more revealing about the anxieties of the European settlers—and their supporters in the United States—who were concerned about being grossly outnumbered in a dangerous neighborhood where all too many wished them ill. Ironically, those perceived to be foremost among those in this group were the compatriots of a close Empire ally—African Americans who long had looked to Kenya's neighbor, Ethiopia (the largest independent nation on the continent) for inspiration.[33] The very sovereignty of Ethiopia was a cast-down gauntlet to the colonizers. Then there was the delicate matter that as late as 1930—according to Nairobi—Ethiopians were raiding Kenya for slaves.[34]

When Ethiopia bested invading Italian forces in the 1890s, beating back Rome's attempt at subjugation, few in the North Atlantic were more heartened than African Americans—and few were more disheartened than those British seeking suzerainty over Kenya—just as Mussolini's fateful 1930s incursion into Kenya's backyard evoked an anguished outcry from them.[35]

Thus, the colonial authorities—as noted—were extraordinarily keen in insuring that African Americans were kept far from East Africa. Despite their assiduous efforts, a stream of the darkest of U.S. nationals decamped to Ethiopia, just across the border from Kenya. This group included Missourian, Daniel Robert Alexander, who migrated there in 1908. By one account, by the 1930s of the 150 or so U.S. nationals in Ethiopia, a significant two-thirds were African American.[36]

Once again, Washington's position, while not anticolonialist was at times perceived by the major powers as being not sufficiently calloused in confronting Africans. This may shed light on why Ethiopia's leader, Haile Selassie I, turned to Washington since it did not control colonial territory in the region and, thus, could serve as a counterweight to London, Paris, Rome and Berlin. Thus, in 1930 the Emperor invited Everett A. Colson to Addis Ababa to assume the critically important duty of financial adviser to the government, then turned to fellow U.S. national, John Spencer, as an advisor in international law. Indeed, as Spencer later put it, "throughout his reign, as automatically as a compass needle drawn towards the magnetic pole, His Majesty turned towards the United States…" Just before Colson's arrival in the decrepit, dilapidated Ethiopian capital, awash in poverty and disease, His Majesty engaged the U.S. engineering firm, J.G. White and Company, to undertake a hydrographic and engineering survey of the water resources of the Lake Tana and Blue Nile region of Ethiopia.[37] London was displeased and doubly so when Ethiopia sought to assert sovereignty over territory along the border that, it was thought, should have been in Nairobi's jurisdiction.[38]

London was equally not amused as African Americans, attracted by the beacon of independence that was Ethiopia, began to take a decided interest in East Africa. As war clouds began to gather over Addis Ababa, James Ford, the black Communist leader, examined the region and was not happy with what he saw. "The population of Kenya declined from 2,700,000 in 1914 to 2,400,000 in 1924," while in the "Belgian Congo the population used to be twenty millions, whereas at present very optimistic calculations put their number at seven million," he proclaimed; in Gabon, where France ruled, "the native population slumped from 1,500,000 to 300,000 by 1921…." In all these colonies, he said, "children, boys and girls are compelled to find work" and, at times were "burnt alive" for failure to comply. There was "forced child labor for private contractors" in Angola, where Portugal held sway—all of which was comparable to "Negro Oppression in America," the headquarters of lynching and chain gangs.[39]

Ford's words were hard to ignore, not only because he represented a political party whose support was surging in light of the ravages of economic woe but, also because he was linked to a power—the Soviet Union—which was zealously interested in supporting those wishing to subvert the Empire. Strikingly, when Mussolini's legions invaded Ethiopia, Ford was no less concerned with shining his spotlight of indignation not just on Rome but on European colonialism as a whole. As he saw it, Italy's threats of brigandage "aroused and moved the American Negro masses more than any other international event in recent history;" thus, during the "Harlem upsurge of March 19, 1935…Italian liquor shops were smashed with cries of 'Down with Mussolini'…" As he saw it, there was reason to link the North Atlantic closely with what was then occurring in Africa, since "for the past 15 years the European powers have sought to break the United States' virtual monopoly of raw cotton. For British imperialism, which imports the largest amount of cotton, Ethiopia is the key to its elimination of the United States as a source of cotton. To attain its ends, it considers the enslavement of the Negro people of Ethiopia as an insignificant and necessary 'sin.'" Thus, as he saw it, Rome may have been the immediate culprit but even if it were defeated, London would still need to be confronted, since as early as 1906, Britain had sought to divide this East African monarchy into "'spheres of influence'" to be shared with its fellow European sovereigns. Thus, he was pleased with the "monster mass meeting" in "one of the largest Negro churches in Harlem" that railed against European schemes in East Africa: "over 3[,]000 packed the church," he said, in an unprecedented display of unity as "member of the Universal Negro Improvement Association (Garvey Movement) in their martial uniforms mingled with Communists and other workers…"

Similar to London, Ford too was concerned with Tokyo's role in the region, cautioning that a "Race War" was not in the offing, though he recognized that "certain Negro leaders, no doubt supported by Japanese imperialist agents, contend that the Japanese imperialists are friends of the Ethiopian people under the false notion created by Japanese agents that Japan is the friend of so-called darker races against white imperialist nations…" He also objected to the then popular idea of "American Negroes, particularly Negro ex-service men, forming a volunteer army to go to Ethiopia"—"while very noble and expressing heroic

sentiments," he observed, this was "thoroughly impractical…"[40] Yet Ford's protestations notwithstanding, a trickle of men from the United States made it to Addis Ababa in their effort to aid the besieged regime,[41] helping to bring the benighted corner of the world that was East Africa to a larger audience in black America. Amongst these was John Robinson, an African American pilot who became the Emperor's personal courier.[42]

Visiting Switzerland, Ford joined a journalist with the *Baltimore Afro-American* newspaper and his comrade, Benjamin Carreathers of the League of Struggle for Negro Rights in Pittsburgh, in conferring with Tecle Hawariate, the leading Ethiopian diplomat. The well-groomed man from Addis Ababa was small and dark-skinned and, akin to Ford, spoke with cool deliberation. His words were designed to appeal to African Americans, some of whom were concerned with stories they were hearing that suggested that Ethiopia disdained them. The message from this confab was explicit: "'there is not one American Negro,'" it was claimed, "'that would not give his last penny for Ethiopia's cause.'" simply "'to show that colored people are just as much human beings as white people.'"[43] The masses marching contemporaneously in Harlem in defense of Ethiopia no doubt agreed.[44]

London had to be concerned that those so militantly defending Ethiopian sovereignty might begin to wonder why her southern neighbor—Kenya—had a monarch in London as sovereign. And London also had to be concerned that its own European neighbors might want to relieve the Empire of its burden of anxiety by replacing it in Nairobi. There was a nagging suspicion that Rome particularly was seeking to wield undue influence in neighboring Somalia, whose denizens in any case were viewed in London as being noticeably militant and confrontational.[45] London saw Somalis as "deceitful and treacherous," opined the future U.S. ambassador to Kenya, Smith Hempstone.[46] That most of these neighbors of Kenya were Muslim only heightened anxieties in Nairobi,[47] not least since this agitation could potentially inflame co-religionists centered in Mombasa. Seeking to suppress Islam was a policy that failed to elude the attention of the colonizers, in any case,[48] though hardly successfully.[49]

But like a boxer being pummeled by an opponent as he was backed into a corner of the ring, London did not have that many good choices. "Abyssinia is not wanted for a colony" by Rome, screamed one British journal in the 1930s. No, it insisted, "its destiny is the loaded pistol" aimed at British East Africa, then "Egypt… [the] Red Sea, Aden," then the prize of all prizes: the Suez Canal.[50] Like a precursor of the "domino theory" that ensnared Washington in Southeast Asia decades later, Nairobi and London thought a stand had to be made in Ethiopia, otherwise they'd find themselves soon hurriedly and chaotically evacuating from Mombasa.

Consequently, London and Nairobi believed Rome had to be confronted after Mussolini's toppling of the Emperor. But what would be the long-term impact of acquiescing to the arming of Africans to fight Europeans? Might that let loose the seditious notion that Kenyan Africans too could accomplish their objectives by arming? But Rome's sweeping aside the monarchy in Addis Ababa narrowed options tremendously so that Kenya's governor in 1939 raised the disquieting

prospect of "raising a revolt among the Abyssinians against the Italians at the *commencement* of hostilities with Italy…"[51] [emphasis-original]

Perhaps it was the angst about the perils in the region that caused the settler regime persistently and systematically to seek to attract more migrants—Europeans, of course, British preferably, Rhodesians desirably, Euro-Americans naturally—to their shores.[52] This was not easy, however. Despite the romance that accompanied safaris, even the less than discerning potential emigrant realized that dangers of the human variety might lurk in East Africa. Then there were the other costs. Though African labor was dirt cheap which meant a full complement of servants to service every wish, whim and need, Kenya was not inexpensive. In 1922 one U.S. diplomat reported that he had just heard from "an American who lived in East Africa from 1911 to 1921" who was now residing in Oakland and was declaring that "living there is 30% less than Kenya…"[53] There were "high prices and profiteering" in Kenya groused another U.S. official. "There are only two hotels that are at all livable" and even the vaunted and presumably resolved "servant question" was "very problematical" in that "all the house servants are native boys" and "it takes two or three of them to do the work of one servant in more civilized places." Besides, there was "no sewage system in Nairobi," which meant fascinating health problems accompanied by a distinct aroma. There were "no tram or bus lines," which pleased those who sold Ford automobiles but few others and since there were "no native women servants" the "European housewife" was terribly distraught.[54] "Buy a Ford and make it your slave—it will enjoy it" proclaimed one diverting advertisement playing subliminally on the related notion that rationalized brutal labor exploitation: this was "the only instance in the world of the cheapest being the best." Perhaps so, a potential emigrant may have thought, but getting an automobile offloaded in Mombasa seemed beyond the ken of many.[55]

Ironically, what often seemed to bring a number of Euro-Americans to the perilous environs of the colony that was Kenya was precisely the prospect of danger—that is, encounters with wildlife. Yet Euro-Americans coming from a continent where restive indigenes only recently had been subdued and where wildlife of various sorts had roamed only recently, often brought a sensibility—and behavior—to Kenya that was disturbing to some. This was no small matter since potentially Euro-Americans could augment the relatively tiny settler community in a way that dwarfed the potential of peer nations. Repeatedly, Euro-Americans were accused of committing grave depredations against the flora and fauna of Kenya. Repeatedly still, there were—as the U.S. consul put it—"frequent requests made by American citizens for special privileges to be granted in connection with proposed shooting expeditions to Kenya Colony"; in "one or two instances," he continued, "American citizens have falsely held themselves out [to be] collectors,"[56] when poachers of the worst sort would have been an accurate descriptor. Included in this odious category was one H.A. Snow, a supposed "American Motion Picture Photographer"; on the verge of being "excluded as being an undesirable alien," he had the "most unenviable reputation of any American, whether hunter, official, businessman or tourist" due to his "unsportsmanlike, unscrupulous, cruel and illegal behavior."[57] Dangerous animals tended to attract dangerous men to the dangerous neighborhood that was Kenya.

One colonial journalist was disappointed with his co-racialist, Mr. Snow. He was disgruntled about the "game slaughter by motor-car" spearheaded by the "Western Yankee in Africa"; this was a "deliberate and calculated cruelty which has been practiced on the game of this country." Snow, a declassed element from California previously "engaged in the uninspiring work of driving a taxi-cab . . . where he was looked upon locally as being a 'nut' " had made his way to Kenya where he may have suspected that he would be welcomed warmly—at least initially—simply because he would augment a beset settler community. Thus, over a 36 month period this " 'nut' " accumulated a "vast collection" of "68 complete animal groups; 250 animal heads; 1[,]500 birds . . . 10,000 bugs, 10,000 moths and 20,000 butterflies," a "complete storehouse of ethnology"—and more. He "indulged" by "shooting point-blank into the herds and running them down with his car when they were too exhausted to run any further, then the wounded and injured animals were driven past the camera . . ."

Similarly outraged was William Hornady of the Bronx Zoo who lambasted Snow's "greed for money," as the "films and blood of African wild animals almost passes the bounds of comprehension. I never have known his equal for sheer blood thirstiness and brutality . . ." Another critic pointed to the "motor car" as the "most potent engine of destruction as far as concerns the wild fauna" and Euro-Americans were the prime perpetrators. Figuratively shaking his head disapprovingly, he added, "to the Britisher [*sic*] it sounds strange that Americans, or at least the worst sections of Americans, should consider a country administered by Britain open to their malpractices and unsporting methods when their own game in the States is protected against poachers and butchers . . ." It could have been added that this tardy solicitude for wildlife in the United States emerged after their decimation; likewise, the "worst sections of [Euro-] Americans" were being admitted to the colony since a nervous Nairobi apprehensive about encirclement by the unfriendly did not have many options. But in a final flourish suggesting why these "worst sections" found Kenya hospitable, it was noted waspishly, "considering what the Government spends on schemes like Jew protection in Palestine one would imagine that it could afford sufficient funds for the preservation of animal life throughout the Empire . . ."[58]

This retrograde attitude made it difficult for the colonial authorities to crackdown appropriately on the likes of Snow and, instead, made it more likely that white "nuts"—in the guise of white hunters—from the United States would be admitted to Kenya. The writer, Isak Dinesen, who as much anyone is responsible for a romantic version of colonial Kenya, spoke in 1938 of her "mill-manager, wild-eyed and sweating in the lamplight. His name was Belknap, he was an American and an exceptionally capable, inspired mechanic, but of an uneven mind. With him things were either nearing the Millennium or dark without a glimpse of hope."[59] He was reflective of the "uneven" cast of Euro-American migrants to the colony. The well-known Dinasen was no stranger to Euro-Americans in any case, as her father owned a cabin in Wisconsin and her distinguished admirers included Carson McCullers, with whom she shared intimacies.[60]

Thus, driven in no small part by uneasiness about being surrounded by angry Africans, restive Indians, conniving Japanese, and scheming Germans

and Italians, Nairobi seemed condemned to welcome the scum among Euro-Americans. Thus, U.S. consul Charles Albrecht complained in 1928 about "the present tendency in East Africa" to criticize the United States; this was an "old charge" he observed, this idea that "Americans are not as good sportsmen as the British—which one constantly comes across in British East Africa…"[61] Yet, given the constraints, what could London do? When George Eastman, who presided from Rochester, New York over a fortune built on photography, planned to come to Kenya and the Congo "in search of gorilla,"[62] according to the U.S. consul, how could he be refused by Nairobi?

Figure 3 Kenya Colony. Nairobi. Sixth Avenue. Main thoroughfare.
Source: Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, [LC-M31-8429].

Colonial Kenya included a sizable number of European settlers, which assisted in the attraction of capital that often eluded other regions in Africa.

4

Catastrophe Looms

Early in 1939, the U.S. consul in Nairobi was in a familiar position—complaining about "subversive propaganda among native blacks." The difference was from whence this threat to the settlers and their acolytes emanated. It was coming not from Japanese nor Indians nor Africans themselves but from a resurgent German community, not reconciled to having relinquished neighboring Tanganyika in the settlement of the previous war. Now they were rattling their howitzers, threatening an even greater conflict, and were not above threatening catastrophe, bringing down the heretofore sacred temple of white supremacy—at least in its Anglo-American iteration—by seeking to turn "native blacks" against European settlers. The impact of the Germans effort was "particularly evident among the ex-German askaris—native police and soldiers" in Tanganyika but was bound to spread northward. "The Nazi Party is so well-organized," warned consul, E. Talbot Smith, "that no German disapproving of their subversive or anti-British propaganda dare voice his feelings . . ." The British position was so unsteady that "there is now a German legal system co-existing with the British"—a form of dual power that, if history was any guide, was a simple prelude to a dislodging of the existing sovereign. Already launched was a boycott of British goods and shops—an economic challenge to accompany the political one—and "through the numerous German missions" more "German propaganda" was being disseminated "to the blacks."[1]

The successor to the Great War was to shake the very foundations of colonial rule in Kenya. London was reduced to recruiting hundreds of thousands of Africans to preserve British sovereignty over them, an eviscerating contradiction that was exacerbated when these forced recruits were thrown into close contact with African Americans with searing grievances all their own. Perhaps as a result of the challenges to their legitimacy in Kenya, the ongoing need for support from their erstwhile ally in North America and growing black political clout in New Deal Washington, the colonial authorities finally had begun begrudgingly to provide visas to African Americans, whose stunned reports about the abysmal conditions in this slum-like colony only brought closer the day when the Union Jack was lowered permanently in Nairobi.

London was lucky to escape merely with the everlasting dispatching of their tattered banner in Kenya for if Berlin had had its way, the Union Jack might also

have been enduringly buried on the westside of the Channel. In the meantime, Washington's man in the region continued his Stakhonovite production of troubling dispatches, informing the U.S. secretary of state in the Spring of 1938 about the flood of Germans arriving in East Africa. There were "rumors" of the arrival of a heavy weight of arms (not intended for hunting animals) by this growing population of Germans. Just as London was busily seeking to appease Berlin by giving it carte blanche in the Sudetenland, there was fear in Nairobi that Tanganyika might be "transferred to Germany," then "Kenya might follow as a substitute for SouthWest Africa [Namibia] because the British taxpayer will resist a call for the millions that would have to be spent on the defence of Kenya…" Gloom was descending on a depressed Nairobi[2]—a dispiriting prospect that could only enhance the value of maintaining loving relations with Washington.

For already, according to Washington's delegate on the scene, there was a burgeoning corps of "prominent Nazi leaders" in Kenya, where their rancid racial ideology could receive nourishing replenishment from the settlers. In fact, the legalized white supremacy that prevailed in the colony in a sense paved the way for Berlin's rising influence—not just in East Africa but globally since those predisposed to this ideology could rest assured that Germany would impose a more muscular and authentic version. As the U.S. consul viewed it, "arms" were "being smuggled" alongside these Germans. There was also a "not inconsiderable number of German Jewish refugees"[3] arriving in the region but given the prevalent anti-Semitism among the settlers, this was perceived as a central threat to guard against. In July 1938 tempers in the colony were aflutter as Sir Robert Brooke-Popham observed; a "scheme for settlement of Jews in Kenya" was creating a ruckus. It "raised quite a lot of excitement," and, he, as the governor, did his part to stir a frenzy. "I have always been strongly opposed to any sort of Jewish enclave in Kenya," he sniffed, since "our racial problems are already sufficiently complicated…" There were not only Africans and Indians but of late riveting his attention was the "pretty big Arab population along the Coast…"[4] Quite worrisome still was the disturbing report that politically minded African leaders had been discovered to be meeting secretly with the Italian Consul in Nairobi.[5] It was at that juncture that Nairobi devised a scheme to cope with an internal rising accompanied by an external attack.[6]

That the U.S. consul may not have been mistaken was suggested when one British settler south of Kenya in neighboring Arusha expressed similar sentiments. "Being a hotelkeeper please keep my utterances confidential," he said worriedly, but "observations among the 'town' natives seem to indicate that 99% are in favour of Germans taking over, they [know] nothing of Nazism but are convinced that the Germans have money and therefore are not dependent on theirs in the way of Hut Tax," referring to a particularly objectionable levy on indigenes: "the intense propaganda of the 4[,]000 local Germans is now having its effect," he warned.[7]

It seemed that the drumbeats of war were sounding ever louder and, as a result, nerves were frazzling, pulses were racing, tempers were flaring. Not being a colonial power in the region, Washington was thought to be exempt but their consul in Addis Ababa confessed, "I am somewhat worried regarding the fate

of our missionaries in the provinces of Kambata, Walama and Gamo," in light of the challenge of Rome and the general level of hostility; in vast neighboring Sudan concern too was growing.[8] The rise of Tokyo, Rome and Berlin, who were intent on disrupting the status quo, was not good news for the Anglo-American alliance.

Presumably some Africans found it hard to distinguish between the policies of the Axis powers and their opponents—the emerging Anglo-American alliance that with the reliance on Moscow was able to prevail during the global war. Visiting Moshi in the shadow of the epic Mount Kilimanjaro in early 1938, the inquisitive African American scholar, Ralph Bunche, also seemed stunned to discover that "natives prefer Germans because Germans there are very good and kind to the natives *now*." [emphasis-original] "Most of the Germans," he observed "are pro-Hitler and they all confidently expect the return of Tanganyika to Germany." At the same time, Bunche was struck by the reaction to the incursion of Jewish refugees. "Non-Europeans are not very sympathetic toward the poor Jew," he wrote, that is, the "Kenya Indians are very bitter and cynical toward Jews and not at all regretful of their persecution in Germany." Perhaps this persecuted minority should not have taken this personally since Bunche also concluded that "Indians, even the educated ones…constantly refer to the natives as 'niggers.'" Still, that Germans could be viewed favorably by Africans was an indication of the brutalizing they had received from the British, which engendered a desperate search for allies.

Aboard a ship to Mombasa, Bunche bumped into "Mueller, the young German scientist, who has put out his first papers. Thinks Roosevelt interferes too much with business; that Hitler is O.K. That inheritance taxes are bad, that [Tom] Mooney [leftist U.S. political prisoner] got justice and that [Albert] Einstein is a bad egg because he made a plea for Mooney (not because Einstein is a Jew of course)."[9]

Thus, the prospect of being dislodged forevermore from the region had concentrated wonderfully the mind of the settlers, causing them to reconsider some of their bedrock policies, for example, keeping African Americans far distant from the colony; perhaps now they could be whipped into an anti-Nazi frenzy that might cause them to overlook the inconvenient fact that alien rule continued to obtain in Nairobi. Consequently, the anthropologist and writer, Eslanda Robeson, better known in many circles as the spouse of the legendary artist-activist, Paul Robeson, began to contemplate a journey to East Africa in the mid-1930s. In exile[10] in London, she along with her husband, became acquainted with the Kenyans resident there, including the man who came to be known as Jomo Kenyatta. Referred to as Johnstone Kenyatta at times, he was introduced formally to the growing world of Communists when he penned an article in 1930 for a U.S. Communist publication targeting African Americans that detailed how the "African people" had come to "rise in revolt," that is, "how Harry Thuku led the struggle against imperialism." Perhaps referring to the research to be assisted by Carnegie, he referred acerbically to the idea that "white settlers think the mentality of the Africans is one much lower level than their own…"[11] By 1933 the U.S. Embassy in London had listed Kenyatta as affiliated to the

Communist-dominated International Committee of Negro Workers, which also included James Ford and Otto Huiswood, known to be U.S. Communists, along with other comrades from British Guiana, Trinidad, and South Africa.[12]

As an outgrowth of such thoughts, Kenyatta quickly became close to the likeminded, starring with Paul Robeson in a film, who then provided the virtually penniless African with various commodities. Both had visited Russia and, at that point, both saw Moscow as a useful counterweight to European powers.[13] "Kenyatta owed money to everyone," claimed the similarly impecunious Trinidadian intellectual, C.L.R. James, "and he may well have tried to get Robeson to help him out financially."[14]

Perhaps buoyed by the stories she heard from Kenyatta, Eslanda Robeson sought to journey to his homeland. By the mid-1930s she was ready for this voyage for "in America," she observed, "one heard little or nothing about Africa. I hadn't realized that, consciously, until we went to live in England. There was rarely even a news item about Africa in American newspapers or magazines…" London, growingly worried about the region and eager to gain adherents in Washington, still balked at retreating from its long-standing policy of not allowing African Americans within hailing distance of Kenya. "The visas were the real problem," she recalled later. "It seems as if you are Negro you can't make up your mind to go to Africa and just go. Oh no," she sighed, "unless you are a missionary"—and even those in that exalted category did not encounter a path garlanded with rose petals on the way to Nairobi. As she saw it, "the white people in Africa do not want educated Negroes traveling around seeing how their brothers live," she said with bitterness; "nor do they want those brothers seeing Negroes from other parts of the world, hearing how they live."[15] She would not relent but ultimately London did.[16]

Nevertheless, her journey was not one of safari-like pleasures, unlike others from the United States but, instead, she embarked in May 1936 on a voyage of discovery and steely determination and, to a degree, liberation. As it turned out, making her way to Kenya was not easy for an African American woman at this point. It was too reminiscent of what she had left behind when she had abandoned the United States for London. "Traveling about Africa," she recalled with little joy, "reminds me of traveling through the Deep South in America: you are passed from friend to friend, from car to car, from home to home, often covering thousands of miles without enduring the inconveniences and humiliations of the incredibly bad Jim Crow train accommodations and lack of hotel facilities for Negroes."

By such circuitous means she arrived in Mombasa by mid-July 1936 and, fortunately, Robeson was able to secure a hotel room. This did not dull her political sensibilities for almost immediately she detected the unavoidable: the "innumerable African servants everywhere, in long white gowns and white caps. They seemed interested in us, as [we] were in them…" Arriving in Nairobi, the perceptive visitor compared the capital to a "bustling border town. Cars are everywhere, reminding me vaguely of Detroit"—perhaps it was the presence of Ford motor cars, which dominated the local market. But it was the unequal social setup that was most striking to this woman, whose familiarity with the "Deep South" made

her acutely sensitive to racist injustice. "So far I have come across many Europeans here in Africa," she remarked, "who I am sure are living at a much higher standard than they were accustomed to in the home country." On the other hand, the ineluctable complement to this sad reality was, as Robeson described it, "Africans tell me they themselves—the vast majority of them—are at a much lower standard now than before the coming of the Europeans." Concluding her reflections in words that sought to rebuke the then ongoing racist research seeking to prove otherwise, she wrote with emphasis, "*Africans are people*."[17] [emphasis-original]

The impact upon her—and those she influenced, her charismatic and powerful spouse, not least—was electric. "You know," she said upon departing the continent, "all Americans, except Negroes, come from somewhere…all have, way back, a 'mother' country. But we Negroes have none," she lamented sadly. "This visit to Africa," she added brightening, "made me feel very much the way I'm sure a German-American must feel when he first visits his 'old country'…"[18]

Nonetheless, a similarly electric encounter in Kenya was experienced by Ralph Bunche, an African American then on a singular journey from the left and camaraderie with the likes of Robeson to the highest level of the U.S. elite—then to a similar level at the United Nations. Like the Robesons, he too had sought to conjoin the destinies of Africans and African Americans.[19] Like Eslanda Robeson, Bunche possessed a pale complexion, which may have eased his path through the color-obsessed colony that was Kenya. Also like Robeson, Bunche knew and was friendly with Kenyatta. As early as 1937 he was present at numerous gatherings with the Kenyan exile in London. "Had a gab-fest" with "Eric Williams"—the Trinidadian scholar—and "Kenyatta," he scribbled in his diary in mid-March of that year; his spouse, Ruth, "fixed sandwiches" and they had a "jolly time." The format was similar to that unfolding in progressive black circles globally; they "talked Africa, anti-imperialism & Pan-Africanism." The only difference here was Bunche's remark that "Kenyatta's going to teach me Swahili," for which the often impecunious Kenyan charged him handsomely—or so thought Bunche.

A few days later "Kenyatta called" again, Bunche reported. He loves "Russia & the Scandinavian countries & their peoples," he noted, but to the then left-wing Bunche he was an "intense racial chauvinist rather than a Marxist," one of his favorite categories—this despite the fact that "he spent a year & 4 months in school in Russia. Said he was treated royally. He was obviously given all sorts of special privileges," including that rare perquisite for an African, a "room to himself." He also "attended the Workers' School" in Britain for three months, in order to gain a basic understanding of the science of revolution. Yet, said Bunche, he "claims to hate the British & to trust few, if any, white men…" Kenyatta, claimed Bunche still, "invariably expressed hatred & distrust of all whites—use them but don't trust them is his advice…" Kenyatta, who Bunche thought was not alien to eccentricities, was prone to strolls "around town with a spear"—"exhibitionism?" he wondered.

Strikingly, it was Bunche who referred to an "ofay gal" who was intimate with another Kenyan in exile in London, using the "Pig Latin" version of "foe" in referring to this European woman. Nonetheless, whatever reservations Bunche may have had about Kenyatta's opinions of "ofays," they remained in close contact

with the African American reading and commenting on the African's writings before publication.

Soon, Bunche had departed London for Nairobi and, like Eslanda Robeson, made a stopover in South Africa where he spent considerable time communing with Communists. By early 1938, as Germans were pouring into Dar es Salaam, Bunche had decamped in the city that came to be known as Maputo, Mozambique, where again like Robeson, he was sensitive to poverty—"they seem to have social equality," he said, "they seem to wear more shoes than in most places in South Africa…" He was to ascertain that this Portuguese colony had less Jim Crow than its British counterpart in East Africa. Shortly thereafter he was in Nairobi where a "large delegation of the Kikuyu Central Association"—no doubt alerted by Kenyatta—"was on hand to greet me"; there were "about 20" in all. He then met "Burke the [West] Indian Negro advocate who has been out here for years & had the reputation of being the best advocate in the colony. He's chocolate colored & white haired [and] trained at Inns Court of London." Then he made his way to a "native reserve" where he found it "incongruous listening to 'Fats' [Waller] with his 'yas, yas' way out here…"[20]

For Bunche as well as Robeson, journeying to Africa was instructive not only about colonialism but, as well, the poisonous grip of white supremacy which bedeviled North America. On the way to the island of Zanzibar, not far from the mainland city of Dar es Salaam, Bunche was involved in a minor scrape and, thus, he recalled, "I tried the white man's voice of authority stunt, stood up majestically (if precariously) and yelled at the ring leader in the other boat to *cease*. I was completely ignored and squelched." [emphasis-original] Then he bumped into "Josef Makwie—who speaks 'proper English' " (Bunche's French was of little help here) and hailed from Zanzibar. "He worked on ships and says he knows America well;" he had "jumped ship and worked in the sugar refineries" there for nine months before being ousted. "He spotted me as an American Negro right off. He says he knew Marcus Garvey" and then Bunche noted, "Josef doesn't like white men and especially *not* Englishmen," a feeling that may have been explained by the fact that "non-whites are generally barred from hotels here, though exceptions are sometimes made when some influential non-white or white intercedes on behalf of a 'distinguished' visitor…" Consequently, when an "English business man invited one of his important Indian clients to his hotel for tea—to discuss business matters. The hotel…refused to serve the Indian in the lounge, and so they repaired to the Englishman's room for tea, and the Indian went. At the same hotel later, a Japanese business man was confronted with the identical situation, and he took such a firm attitude and raised so much hell that the hotel served his Indian friend *in the* lounge to the Japanese." Anticipating the difficulty that the Anglo-American alliance would encounter during the Pacific War and why Tokyo's rise forced an agonized retreat from the more egregious aspects of white supremacy, Bunche could not avoid noticing that "the Indians are sympathetic to the Japanese…for they feel that the Japs [*sic*] will be forced to line up with the darker races, and that they will be stronger allies in the ultimate fight of East vs. West."

It was in the wilderness of Kenya that Bunche then encountered Chief Koinange, an African, whose family was to play a major role in his nation's emancipation. They established a "great rapport from the start," according to the chief's lineal descendant, the famed journalist, Jeff Koinange, "and spent many afternoons picking each other's brains on issues and views that affected both their peoples on the two continents…" Bunche "was received like a long lost son and ended up extending his stay in Kenya due to the hospitality accorded him"—"though the Gikuyu [*sic*] people, seeing his light skin but distinct African features, gave him the nickname Karioki, meaning 'one who has come back from the dead.'" The diminutive chief—he was barely five feet tall—and the much taller Bunche made an odd couple though "so close was [the] relationship with the Chief and his people" that he offered Bunche an incentive to stay in the village: he "offered me a shamba, a hut, sheep and goats and 5 wives if I would stay," Bunche declared. But more than this, it seemed they bonded over music. "I keep hearing Paul Robeson in the background singing 'Old Man River' sounding very bizarre out here in the middle of a Native Reserve,"[21] said the leading scholar.

He "hums after Paul Robeson's and Fats Waller's records," Bunche noted approvingly of his brand new best friend, the powerful Chief, but was "especially fond of Clyde McCoy's weird 'hot' recording of 'Tear it Down' and 'Sugar Blues' (Decca) which I brought him." The Kenyan also appreciated receiving Robeson's versions of "Ma Lindy Lou' and 'Ma Curly Headed Boy." The chief's "latest" wife was a "buxom, laughing young girl, who was particularly impressed by the Josephine Baker" this musical ambassador provided, while the "swing music had Chief Koinange patting his feet and swaying about." Later observing "Nubians (Sudanese)" dancing, he once again sought to draw a parallel with his homeland, observing that "their syncopation is more like that of the American Negro than any I've heard in Africa. The drums, trumpet and singing and clapping combine to make a marvelous and continuing rhythm. They really 'break down,'" he asserted with enthusiasm.

But it was not just a mutual appreciation of African American music and similarities in dance that the African shared with the African American. They discussed the African Slave Trade and the "African Orthodox Church," which Bunche noted had begun in Kenya in the early 1930s, "first in Kikuyu country" where its "anti-white and chauvinistic" message "received great support…" This church, said Bunche, had about 15,000 members and was "organized in 1921 by George Alexander McGuire—a Negro (West Indian?)." He had been "ordained in America and sent to Africa" by the "head of the church.… Archbishop Wm. Robertson" of the United States and this faith which had begun in Chicago.

Bunche then traveled back to Nairobi where he had an enlightening conversation with a court interpreter. "It is very rare for a white man to be sentenced for killing a native"—naturally, as "the juries are white." The "Indians" were "not allowed juries" and "if a native is charged with assault on a European or of murder," then "he is tried by the judge and three African assessors," with a similar process invoked for South Asian defendants. Yet, said Bunche despairingly, "the judge is not bound by the decision of either Indian or African assessors and often ignores their judgments."

Like Robeson, Bunche's intimate familiarity with the United States meant a dearth of shock at some of the more inhumane policies in Kenya. "The death penalty for rape was provided about 1931–32," he wrote blandly, "i.e.[,] rape of Europeans by natives. Soon after the law went into effect an African was hanged on conviction of raping a white woman. Soon after that rape four young Europeans were committed to the Sup. Court charged with raping a Nandi girl in the Navaisha district. There was much evidence against them but they were acquitted." With his mind attuned to the United States, Bunche also felt perversely at home when he discovered that "Europeans often rape native women and law doesn't protect the women."

Like many African Americans, Bunche filtered his Kenyan experience through the lens of the United States, which tended to leave his homeland nor East Africa in a positive light, while tending to equate the tortured experiences of Africans and African Americans alike. The result was to reinforce what was often a preexisting Pan-Africanism, while spotlighting the even more horrendous conditions faced by Kenyan indigenes. Thus, almost from the moment he stepped on to Kenyan soil, what quickly caught his eye was that at "Kalindi pier at Mombasa, near the P.O. are separated [toilets] marked for 'Asiatics' and Europeans." Familiar segregation was perversely unsettling when combined with the notion that Africans had to fend for themselves when it came to attending to important bodily functions.

The settlers were determined to maintain this intolerable status quo too, for as Bunche also observed, "one statement is often heard in Kenya and is attributed by some to the Bishop of Uganda, viz.: 'we must not repeat here the mistake made in India'—i.e.[,] by giving the sort of education which would develop [an] intellectual class of natives who would become dangerous agitators.'" Being a college professor at Howard University, Bunche was notably sensitive to the potent matter of education. While visiting Kisumu, racism was hampering his attempt to find a hotel, so he then spoke to a local official of the settler colony who asked querulously, "you are from Harvard? Does Harvard admit Negroes?" Bunche replied, "oh yes. I hold two degrees from there." Surprised, the official responded, "Then you don't have all this trouble in your own country?" Bunche then had "to explain the dual situation to him," as he deepened his understanding of the differences that separated raw colonialism from stark Jim Crow. As it turned out Kisumu may have been enlightened for the celebrated paleo-anthropologist, Louis Leakey told Bunche that "he was certain the Nakuru hotels would not take me—they were about the worst in the colony…"

Bunche, the polished diplomat, was appalled when he witnessed a "white mechanic" at the "Ford shop where we went for repairs was particularly profane toward his native helper. Sample: 'come on you bastard and bring those pliers.'" As such, Bunche was hardly predisposed to accept any blather about white supremacy, irrespective of its origin. Hence, while visiting the Jeanes School, which received funding from the United States, an official there while "discussing with me the American Negro problem before his…students, remarked that the 'Southern white in America treats the Negro better than the Northern white.'" This was "promptly disputed" by the irate Bunche.

This was not the only touch of home that Bunche encountered. "What to do when reference to 'nigger' is made" was one conspicuous reminder of the United States. Then while traveling with a local settler, Sam Granstock "en route back from Kiambua," Bunche's reference to a "native I had met before" was questioned. "Do you mean," asked Granstock, "you can *really* tell one from another?" It was like home once more, the "all niggers look alike to me" syndrome, as Bunche put it, his ire rising: "I felt like socking him and made my reaction clear," he said angrily.

Things kept coming back to the color bar. He befriended a Kenyan of Indian origin, identified simply as "Dass" who made the "point that the presence of the Indian here in such large numbers has protected the natives against much more severe color-bar and racial legislation and also that the protests of the Indians have put a check on police brutality and ill-treatment…" In another reflection of home, Dass told Bunche "of his great difficulty in obtaining permission to marry his Jewish wife here" and how the government "actually refused him a license and so finally he married according to [the] Hindu religion…" To provide incentive to insure that these racist laws were enforced religiously, "Kenya officials, in proportion to the income of the country, are the highest paid in the world," Bunche was informed. To top it all off, the settlers realizing they were sitting atop a racial volcano with a frail cork seeking to forestall a massive explosion, were as paranoid about the alleged threat of communism as their counterparts in North America. When one important settler "welcomed" Bunche into his office "he immediately made reference to 'communism'," Bunche said, "and added a hope that I wasn't mixed up with it."

All told, Bunche—who was quite influential in intellectual circles in Black America—hardly approved of this settler colony. The coruscating racism aside, it was a "real frontier country—a country of bankruptcies and flagrant credit among traders where Europeans, Indians and natives make a practice of avoiding debts." Bunche did not seem to approve of presumably enlightened intellectuals like Leakey either. He was "very spiteful toward Kenyatta," said Bunche "and obviously concerned about Ken's prospective book on Kikuyu custom," which was little more than "professional jealousy…" Looking disdainfully at the famed settler, Bunche described him dismissively as a "tall, fairly husky but extremely short-winded Englishman. His wife," little better, was "droopy-lipped and droopy-blue-eyed and he are both chain-smokers," he observed with disgust.

On the other hand, there were ever louder hoof-beats of anticolonial distress that the settlers—if they had been paying attention—should have heeded. Adding potentially to the brewing subversion, Bunche happily noted that "Chief [Koinange] took favorably my suggestion about having a Kikuyu flag displayed as well as the Union Jacks stuck all over the place and rushed to have one made by the Indian tailors…" It would be restive Kikuyus in the first place who would stoke the fires of anticolonialism, not least because of their land hunger driven by territory appropriated by the likes of Sir Northrup and his progeny. Tellingly, Bunche noticed the conspicuous reality that the "first two questions most of these [indigenous] people put to me about America are:….can Negroes own land there [in the United States] and do they have land? And," the related question: "can they grow

coffee?" These queries about land were part of a general inquisitiveness about African Americans and their plight: "many people both natives and Indians," said Bunche, "ask me what language is spoken by the American Negro." But land hunger aside, what should have troubled the colonizers was what Bunche was told by Kikuyu leaders who happened to be "war veterans," for they proclaimed that indigenes "should never fight each other for the benefit of the European again." They said that indigenes "have been fools in the hands of whites."[22]

Upon returning to the United States, Bunche did not relinquish his interest in Kenya declaiming at length, about his journey.[23] He remained friendly with Kenyatta, who shortly after Bunche's return from Kenya helped his African friend in his effort to reach the United States; "it would be very pleasant to see you again," said the Kikuyu intellectual.[24] Responding quickly and enthusiastically, Bunche congratulated him on the publication of his now classic book on his homeland and added a dig at one of the settlers he had met in Nairobi. "I am so happy that the book is out," Bunche wrote glowingly, as it "stands as an effective answer to the cheap allegations made by that self-styled 'White African' [Louis] Leakey…" Anticipating an airlift of Kenyan students to the United States two decades later, Bunche also discussed "the prospect of bringing some young Africans over here for their education"—and Kenyatta along with them: "something definite can be done about aiding you to come here for a lecture tour…" The African leader and the African American intellectual had bonded over Swahili lessons in London and now Bunche was effusive in noting that his wife "Ruth and the children often speak of you…"[25]

Kenyatta, like Bunche, was firmly ensconced in a community of the Pan-African Left. He was involved in the defense of the Scottsboro Nine—African American youth in the United States charged falsely with rape and facing execution. With Bunche he worked alongside the Pan African Federation, which London thought included "radical colonial elements" and so-called half-castes—a category that included the noted African American scholar, in London's race-obsessed view.[26] London took note when in 1937 Kenyatta shared a platform at a Trafalgar Square rally for the Scottsboro defendants with the Trinidadian Trotskyite intellectual, C.L.R. James.[27]

Kenyatta, who facilitated his comrade's journey to Kenya, was not the only African who was influenced by Bunche. For a few months after Bunche's departure from East Africa, Chief Koinange unveiled a long range plan to establish in his homeland a major university that would serve the entire region. The idea was to recruit amongst African American educators: he was not only fond of Negro musicians (Fats Waller, Marian Anderson et al.) but the entire panoply of boxers and athletes as a whole who had made their global mark, for example, Robeson, Joe Louis et al. Subsequently, the chief—and his son who he sent to Virginia for higher education—were to contact Bunche during his earliest days at the newly minted United Nations to register complaints about colonialism in Kenya, yet another expression of this Pan-African connection.[28]

Kenyatta also influenced others besides Bunche—a matter of interest to the colonial authorities. Weeks before war erupted in Europe, the Kenya Police asked of their London counterparts "whether it would be possible secretly to

intercept…correspondence" to him from the "Kikuyu Central Association," increasingly active on the sensitive matter of settler control of land.[29] Also of concern to the authorities was Kenyatta's correspondence with Charles Fisk of the United States, whose ties to Kenya stretched back to the turn of the century, and who was reputed to have ties to a ramified network of Pan-African activists. Somehow, a letter from Fisk to Kenyatta, again written just before the outbreak of war, found its way into the hands of the authorities. Therein Fisk briefed Kenyatta about his presence in East Africa; he was engaged in what was perceived as subversive scholarship, "making a study of British rule in Kenya in so far as it had to do with native rights…"[30]

Kenyatta's ties to figures such as Bunche and Fisk had raised his profile. In 1935 London's influential William Gillies had spoken dismissively of Kenyatta—querying his role in the "International African Friends of Abyssinia": "[he]was sent over for the Kikuyu Association and did not carry out his mandate. He is now repudiated by them," he alleged, "as he went to Copenhagen and Moscow and is really co-partner with Bridgeman of the League Against Imperialism," too far to the left for Gillies' refined tastes.[31] Gillies also did not approve of Kenyatta's other left-wing ties, for example, his serving as Vice-President of the "Pan African Federation for the Defence of Africans and Peoples of African Descent," perceived as the epitome of the kind of trans-oceanic left-wing grouping that swept within its ambit African Americans in opposition to the Empire.[32] As Gillies saw it, Kenyatta's association with an organization was sufficient to rule it beyond the pale. "The reference to the United Front and the association with Kenyatta with the organization," he spat out in 1936, "indicates that the Pan-African Federation is a subsidiary of the League Against Imperialism and probably a new version of the Negro Welfare Association," yet another iteration, it was thought, of a Communist concoction no doubt influenced by James Ford of the United States.[33] "You ought certainly to have nothing to do with the Federation," he sternly instructed Rhys J. Davies of the House of Commons.[34]

Yet the continued bonding of Kenyatta and his left-wing comrades in the Pan-African world was not halted by the outbreak of war, first in Europe, then globally, which was to transform the African leader most of all—it set the stage for his trial, imprisonment, then triumph as Kenya's first democratically elected leader, then what was perceived widely as helping to propel "neo-colonialism." But with the arrival of war Kenyatta, Bunche, James Ford, and even Gillies and colonial officials in Nairobi found themselves on the same side of the barricades with the otherwise despised Moscow—an unlikely alliance that was to alter profoundly Kenya in the first place.

For if the Empire was overstretched, straining to defend territory virtually wherever the sun shone, the colony of Kenya itself had defied elasticizing, straining to the snapping point to maintain itself while European and Euro-American settlers were engaged in one long bacchanalian revel. After the guns of war had fired, the eminent Sir Robert Brooke-Popham acknowledged the puniness of his forces, observing that the colony with a "total available European manpower of 8998 has 3039 men serving in the Forces…"[35] Even that slight figure may have been inflated for in 1937, Sir Robert was informed in a "personal" message from

Windsor Castle that "so many people, especially Admirals and Generals, went out to Kenya after the war to get rich quick, and have been disappointed that things have not turned out as they expected." So they were beginning to trickle back to London or seek more commodious climes further south in the Rhodesias and South Africa.[36]

This is why London told Sir Robert that the "governorship of Kenya is one of the most important and difficult in the Colonial Empire"—"strategically it is therefore of increasing significance," given the converging interests of Rome, Berlin, and Tokyo in the region. Both helpful and complicating to the attracting of the needed European—and particularly Euro-American—migrants so necessary to its defense was that Nairobi, was a city that "people fall [in] love with and acquire an emotional rather than a strictly rational attitude" toward their new home, which was ascribed to the heady atmosphere: "at 6[,]000 feet above sea level on the Equator everyone wants to run before they can walk in an atmosphere which doesn't permit of quite such strenuous exercise."[37]

The impact of the thinning air aside, with three thousand men being sacrificed in a single battle, the colony was woefully unprepared for war—unless, of course, thousands of Africans could somehow be convinced that those who had brutalized them routinely should now be deemed a comrade. Africans did choose to fight which served to weaken the colonial project, leaving Kenya like an overly ripe fruit to fall into the lap of Washington—or so thought the U.S. authorities and not without good reason. For after war erupted, the Empire prevailed on its former North American colony to allow its Rome Embassy to represent "British interests in Italian East Africa"—which already suggested that either Italy or the United States would be the beneficiary of London's ouster from the region.[38]

With Germans pouring into the region, along with inquisitive and influential African Americans, London's rule in the region was approaching a catastrophic end. Via England itself and its maintenance of a form of democracy at home (perhaps as the necessary complement to cruel domination in East Africa), African Americans like Bunche and Robeson had begun to form with West Indians like Eric Williams and C.L.R. James a Pan-African solidarity that was to reach efflorescence in Manchester in 1945 and anticolonial battles leading to independence soon thereafter. But before that epochal time was reached, a global war erupted that was not to leave Kenyans or African Americans unaffected.

5

Race War?

It was apparent that Kenya's governor had approached the microphone nervously in the Spring of 1942. The Empire had lost Singapore, his counterpart there—along with others in places such as Hong Kong—were jailed and it seemed that forces from Tokyo or Rome soon might be appearing on the shores of Mombasa in order to provide him with a similar fate. Yet he had no choice but to make a special appeal to Africans, pleading with them to remain true to the Union Jack, with which they had been flayed so mercilessly over the years. "This is the first time that I have spoken to you…on the air" began Sir Henry Moore, referring unctuously to the "native people of Kenya," to whom he was speaking on radio. "The enemy wants to conquer the whole world," he cried, "and to make all people, black and white, his slaves"; that is why, he continued, the "Japanese" had "sent warships to the Indian Ocean" not far from Kenya's shores.[1] Suggestive of how extensive this hysteria about Japan had become was the fact that the Communist Party of South Africa—a leading antiracist force[2] noted that "the Japanese militarists are not white, it is true."[3]

Still, it was Sir Henry's pained remarks that incidentally captured why this global conflict accelerated the ongoing attempt to free Kenya from colonial domination. Africans had to be called on in great number to rebuff the Axis challenge and they were in no mood to return to the status quo ante after shedding buckets of blood. African Americans too answered the military's call and they were similarly inclined; when the two encountered each other in the Indian Ocean basin, they reinforced each other's presuppositions to their mutual benefit. By one account, 75, 000 Kenyan indigenes served under the Union Jack during the war, in places as diverse as Europe, India and parts of Asia further East[4] and it was not unusual for them to encounter African Americans in these far-flung locales. In these sites they could see things that undermined colonialism, for example, poorer Europeans, which degraded the idea of their inherent superiority or European troops fleeing at the sight of Japanese—or embittered African Americans who could place Kenya's plight in a militant Pan-African context.

Though London and Nairobi were staring into the barrel of a cocked pistol, there was no guarantee that either would retreat from a colonial model built on notions of racial superiority and brutal exploitation. Though local fascists were

clearly sympathetic to Berlin, Nairobi was loath to confront them. After London arrested Sir Oswald Mosley, the leader of British fascists, a self-described "Kenya Settler" wondered querulously, "why is it that the Kenya Government has taken no action against the local branch of the movement?"[5] To be fair, the fascism among the settlers was not unique. In late 1943, the U.S. consul in Nairobi, Willard Quincy Stanton, spoke wondrously of "Tanganyika's Secret Hitler Shrine," "describing the peculiar former Nazi center of the Berlin Lutheran Mission at Dar-es-Salaam…" Some U.S. nationals there were apparently hedging their bets as some reportedly too were pro-Berlin.[6] Bolstering their putative sedition was the panicky report by one U.S. diplomat in the Spring of 1943 warning that "Japanese, German and Italian broadcasts" were being "aimed at the two elements of the East African population which would be most susceptible to Axis propaganda, that is, the natives and the Indians."[7]

In such a fetid atmosphere, it was not surprising that Africans fighting for the Empire received the lowest pay and of the Africans, those from the eastern part of this continent received the lowest pay of all, suggesting their place on the colonial totem pole. The problem for the Empire was that they were embroiled in a fight with a clever foe, Japan, and this opponent was not above playing its own unique racial games, as their forces targeted British officers. Tokyo's forces also expressed reluctance to shoot at askaris, or East African forces, and instead told them that instead of losing their lives in the wilds of Burma, they should return home to drive European aliens out of Africa as Japan was presumably doing in Asia. Similarly, Japan was invoked by some indigenes and numerous African Americans as a clear example of a non-European nation that might have conquered the haughty Empire—but for the timely assistance of Africans and African Americans.

Perhaps even more subversive were the lessons learned by East Africans from African Americans. The latter provided heroic tales of Haitians rising up to abolish slavery and bitter tales of the perfidy of the color bar in the United States. They told their African brethren about how Ethiopians had vanquished Italians a few decades earlier. Why should either risk their lives for a blood-stained Empire or a Jim Crow United States? Subsequently, Waruhiu Itote, who went on to play a major role in the movement that came to be known as "Mau Mau," remarked that listening to these U.S. Negroes was like being a student in school and that his interlocutors had been the best of teachers at a critical moment in his life.

"Even more widespread among ex-soldiers," asserts the Kenyan scholar, Okete J.E. Shiroya, "are accounts about African deserters who were helped to escape by black Americans. Most of these deserters, so the askaris say, went to America with the aim of getting some form of training and then returning…" Whether this claim is myth or reality, it is evident that ex-askaris were essential to the anticolonial uprising of the 1950s, furnishing the necessary technical and organizational skills, alongside an ideology that stressed the injustice of the status quo. This was the case throughout the region, as askaris played a similar role in Uganda and Zanzibar.[8]

Despite the obvious plans of Tokyo, Rome, and Berlin to destabilize the Empire, the settlers continued to party as if it were 1899. "Kenya's new aristocrats," asserts

the historian, Caroline Elkins, "shared Lord Delamere's ambition to create a plantocracy modeled on the American South" of slavery infamy.[9] This was also the impression left by the visiting U.S. writer, Negley Farson, who visited the colony just after the war had erupted. A large man with a thick U.S. accent and a well-chiseled profile, he was born in Plainfield, New Jersey in 1890, then became a champion athlete at the University of Pennsylvania. An adventurer—he was in Petrograd during the Revolution in 1917—and alcoholic with two mistresses, he was made to order for Kenya, as suggested by the fact that his account of his escapades became an instant bestseller. One night he dined with a fellow U.S. national who was friendly with the influential Lord Delamere. "We entered his house," said the awed Farson, "whose interior might have been on 5th Avenue, New York. There was everything; all the latest American magazines, carefully shingled along the drawing room table, the pseudo baronial fireplace—even to the false modeling of a sailing ship…" They were expertly "served by his two Chinamen"—servants of this ethnicity were preferred by those who sought to distinguish themselves by having those other than the now run-of-the-mill hoard of African retainers. But these servants were hardly treated better, as this Yankee, typically clad in an elegant mauve dinner jacket, made of velvet, "paid these Chinamen once every five years"—and it was a pittance at that. Farson happened to encounter a number of his fellow Yankees living well, including an unnamed "pretty young American wife" and "the man whom most of the white hunters themselves admit is the best hunter in Kenya."[10]

The Council on African Affairs (CAA), which came into being shortly after Eslanda Robeson's return from Kenya, and was the major black American lobbying arm in defense of the continent, well knew that commonly accepted notions of white supremacy, which Farson had witnessed, were hemorrhaging as a direct result of Japan's hammer blows. It was askaris, said the CAA, that "played a key role in driving the Axis out of Africa. It was the labor power of the Africans from Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika, and other territories in the East African Military Labor Service and the African Auxiliary Pioneer Corps, which built and repaired the airfields, railroads, motor roads and bridges"[11] that made sure the Union Jack would continue to flutter in the region.

Yet despite the Empire being saved by Africans' blood sacrifice, neither London nor Nairobi seemed inclined to adapt to this new reality. It was the CAA that during the midst of the war brought this scalding fact to a larger audience, as it brought together in Manhattan, Communist City Councilman Ben Davis,[12] Kwame Nkrumah—the future Ghanaian leader—and representatives from the Belgian and Soviet governments. Max Yergan, then the organization's leading spokesman, bemoaned the continued existence of forced labor for mining and agricultural enterprises in Kenya; wages were paltry. There was a color bar and restrictions upon trade union recognition and collective bargaining as well. This could not continue, he demanded and was of a piece with the misery inflicted upon African Americans. "The same way that the Southern region of this country is called the nation's number one economic problem," said Yergan, "so the colonial territories all over the globe may be called the world's number one economic problem…" Washington merely had imported their exploited Africans,

while London maintained them thousands of miles away. A major theme of this CAA gathering was the inter-relation of forced labor practices in colonial areas and the exploitation of workers, particularly minority groups, in the United States, Britain, and other countries.[13]

This war represented a weakening of the grip of the colonial powers and the concomitant ascendancy of the United States, the logical inheritor of the Empire. Simultaneously, Washington had to make concessions—including voting rights—to African Americans, which increased their clout at the ballot box to the detriment of the unreconstructed white supremacists on both sides of the Atlantic. This war also brought the United States into a closer relationship with Africa. With the war thousands of U.S. soldiers and workers began to toil under the burning sun of Africa at military bases Washington was loath to relinquish simply because the war had ended. Eritrea, then a province of Ethiopia, was among these but U.S. forces also arrived in neighboring Congo, in the city then known as Leopoldville. U.S. merchant vessels were flocking to the region surrounding the Red Sea. New consulates were established in Brazzaville in so-called French Congo and Mombasa. The Belgian Congo, which previously sent its copper, cobalt, and other minerals straight to Antwerp, with the war began shipping them to the United States. By 1942 U.S. commerce with Africa had increased in percentage terms more than this nation's trade with any other continent.[14]

Eslanda Robeson, who had maintained her continuing interest in Africa, agreed with this analysis of the continent's importance, asserting that about one half of the essential alloys used in making steel come from Africa, along with "more than one-half of the precious radium, that boon to the health of the world."[15] Yes, concurred Yergan, "the war has made our country a power in Africa…"[16]

As this truly global war plodded on bloodily, the realization had dawned that Africa with its strategic minerals and its unparalleled location as a bridge between Europe and Asia might be the key to triumph. This was the conclusion reached by the writer, Arthur Steiner, when he argued in 1942 that the combination of powers able to hold Africa would be well on the way to ultimate victory. One reason was that this otherwise careworn continent controlled western entrances to the Indian Ocean. As he saw it, Africa was key to the defeat of the Berlin-Rome-Tokyo axis since who controlled East Africa controlled the Red Sea from Suez to Djibouti, which only highlighted the central role of Kenya. Thus, he contended, "a large part of the war of the future is being fought in Africa at this moment."[17]

The high stakes at play sheds light on why on July 15, 1942 a battalion of the "812th Engineers (colored)" from the United States found itself in Kenya. Like their African counterparts, construction was a primary duty. Their presence was unsettling, as their commanding officer, Colonel Francis Colby, remarked. "Our Negro troops," he asserted, "being accustomed to forming a large part of the white civilization, in which they have lived, and many of them with a chip on their shoulder, did apparently desire to mingle to a certain extent with the white population," which was decidedly unwelcome.[18]

Consequently, U.S. diplomat, Paul Alling suggested that London's protests against the use of Negro troops in the region be heeded.[19] But these troops

were in no mood to continue being engines of their own subjugation. The son of Bunche's old friend, Chief Koinange, recalled later that "the British and American officials did not encourage the mixing of Negro GIs with Africans, Europeans or Asians"—but to little avail. For it was on Christmas Eve in 1944 that the chief invited 240 Negro GIs to dinner at his residence in Banana Hills in Kiambu. This was the "first time in Kenya," said the chief's son, Peter Mbiyu Koinange, that "Africans, Europeans, Indians and white and Negro Americans sat around the same table."[20] R. Mugo Gatheru, a Kenyan who was to matriculate in the United States, recalled that it was during the war for the first time indigenes were able to meet U.S. Negroes in any number. This intellectual recalled the scene fondly, observing, "the villages through which they passed went wild with rejoicing to see" the Negro soldiers. The "women and girls ululated as if a new Kikuyu baby had been born! This mass demonstration," he enthused, "certainly represented our attitude toward the American Negroes, our symbols of success. We thought of them merely as more emancipated members of the same community as ourselves and, in fact, when I arrived in America I had a vague expectation that they would act like my fellow tribesmen in Kenya." This was not the first time he had encountered U.S. nationals, as he had known some at the "Kambui mission," which was "under the direction of two American missionaries from Brooklyn": these African Americans brought a special militancy to the region.[21]

Dedan Kimathi, who subsequently became a leading symbol of anticolonial resistance, was also marked indelibly by the war, noting bitterly during the height of the unrest that gripped the 1950s, "imagine the thousands of Africans who lost their lives during the two World Wars? What did they die for and did we benefit from these Wars?" No, he answered, "our reward was slavery." The valiant Kimathi reflected this "Pan-Blackness" that was said to have taken root during the war when he conceded expansively that his fight was not only for Kenya but, as well, for "East Africa and the rest of the continent."[22]

Joining the courageous Kimathi in his questioning of a war purportedly fought for freedom—except for Africans—was another future anticolonial leader, Gakaara wa Wanjau, who too was jailed in the 1950s. "I knew that this war was not our war," he avowed acerbically; "it is not possible to give an indication here of the magnitude of that maltreatment and discrimination" he faced while serving with the Empire forces.[23]

The Kenyan indigene, Bildad Kaggia, who served in Palestine, had a similar experience. Short and stout and a wearer of thick glasses, he was born the son of a poor tenant farmer.[24] He met a physician, "an American Negro [who] was posted to our unit." The African was bedazzled by the African American—"he was the first American Negro to whom I had really talked," he reminisced later, "and for the first time I heard the story of the African slaves…" Struck by it all years later, he observed, "it was a great experience and an eye opener for me and the other African soldiers…" Awed by it all, he recollected, "we could not believe our eyes when we saw a black man wearing three pips on his shoulder…" Best of all, "this doctor was very much interested in Africans and was keen to make friends with us" and "within a short time we were great friends…" The inquiring Negro doctor "was interested to know all about the life of Africans in East

Africa" and Kaggia, in turn, was "keen to know about American Negroes…" One intense conversation they shared concerned his pitifully low salary and the "discussion left a strong impression on my mind. I consider it the beginning of my political consciousness," he acknowledged. Thus, he declared, "my mind became occupied with what I could do to change things, first in the army, then in Kenya. I read political and revolutionary books which opened my eyes." He had witnessed up close "European weaknesses" and knew they could be bested. So steeled, he became a member of Parliament in the first post-independence government in 1963.[25]

A similar experience was enjoyed by the anticolonial leader known simply as "General China" (known to many others as Waruhiu Itote).[26] His response emerged dramatically in the early 1950s, when he came to symbolize "Mau Mau." Then there were the Negro seamen descending on Mombasa and its environs, flashing dollars and draped in finery—which was not exactly the image the colonizers wished the colonized to gaze upon. "The idea of lording it over the natives may have been placed in their heads by enemy agents," groused the U.S. vice consul in Nairobi in the flux-ridden Spring of 1942.[27]

As a result of these seditious attitudes—often inspired by African Americans—the Empire's path during the war was wracked with difficulty. One provincial commissioner seeking to recruit for this conflict expressed frustration, noting that "like the Kikuyu, the Bantu Kavirondo are a difficult tribe" and he could not force himself to "vouch" for their reliability "with confidence." Emboldened by the new atmosphere—the nervousness of the settlers as displayed by the governor deigning to address them over the radio—indigenes expressed more militancy. The district commissioner in North Kavirondo reported in mid-1941 that "several strikes have occurred among certain classes of native mine employees," which he sought to dismiss as "the work of agitators." Three years later little had changed as a provincial commissioner observed with dismay that "enthusiasm" for the war was "flagging"; perhaps the indigenes were not "anti-war" but, more precisely "anti-[g]overnment." In particular there was the "fear of Kaptaket becoming a European area," which was not helping African morale but, again, this discord was attributed to agitators, in this case, "a vociferous minority of Litein Mission boys" had "exploited" the situation. A few months later this anti-Nairobi sentiment had not abated as a "Government owned house at Kimilili" was "burned out by an act of incendiarism"; the "fire-raisers" were "unknown."[28]

Africans sensing the flux brought by the war and inspired by the unsteady hand of the colonial administration seized the opportunity during the war to flee in all directions. Desertions from the King's African Rifles, the elite corps of fighting men, had long been an issue.[29] This continued during the war[30] but they were joined by the notorious victims of conscript labor,[31] and simple laborers alike.[32] As if this were not enough to handle, over-burdened colonial officials had to contemplate this real problem while devising what to do in case of an invasion of the colony[33]—which could only exacerbate their real anxiety.

As if restive Africans and seditious African Americans were not enough to worry the colonizers, they also had to be concerned about their erstwhile ally—Euro-Americans—some of whom seemed all too eager to supplant the beset

British in Kenya. To be sure, there were not that many of them; in Kenya by 1944 the number of heads of families in the colony was 208 (though these were simply those who had registered and probably did not include various adventurers not inclined to do so, nor those who had switched or hidden their U.S. nationality), while the number of dependents was 192, with far fewer in for example, the Seychelles, Tanganyika, and so on.[34] However, they were most strategically sited: By the Fall of 1944 there were no U.S. missionaries in Italian Somaliland but quite a few in Kenya and Uganda, where they maintained 174 schools at nine missions—a substantial contribution to the education of Africans, which was not designed to endear them to the more recalcitrant colonialists.[35]

By March 1945 in the entirety of British East Africa (Kenya, Tanganyika, Uganda, and Zanzibar) and Italian Somaliland and the Seychelles, the total number of U.S. nationals amounted merely to less than 400; 70% were involved in what the U.S. consul in Nairobi termed "sectarian educational work," with 6 in commercial enterprises. There was only one U.S. corporation reported to be operating its own branch in this area—International Harvester Export Company, which had an establishment in Nairobi. The American South African line was based in Mombasa and U.S. oil companies operated their own subsidiaries, though there was only one from this nation reported to be operating his own business on a substantial scale, Robert C. Gilfillan, who sold tires, machinery, and the like. Thus, it was concluded, "American holdings in British East Africa and the other territories" was "very small"—though the trend was upward: "American participation in British East African trade was proportionately greater in 1943 than in 1939…"[36]

The perceptible and steady retreat of the Empire could be detected in the airwaves. As early as July 1942, the Kenya Information Service—sited in the first British Colonial Territory to have a regular wireless broadcasting service, established in 1928[37]—reported that "a good many European listeners" listened to broadcasts from the United States. The BBC had lost credibility, perhaps because of a failure to anticipate the Singapore debacle and, thus, reliance that had been placed by European listeners on both news and commentaries on the BBC had decreased considerably. Consequently, it was noted importantly, "a number of listeners are now tending to rely more on the American service,"[38] which reflected a power that—to that point—had not been proven to be incompetent. This U.S. offensive in Kenya was reflected in South Africa. Emerging there were mutterings about "American infiltration": the "Americans are conducting a systematic publicity campaign in the Union," it was reported though London's quandary was reflected when it was added that "this kind of American material is not undesirable during the war," since "American propaganda is more likely to be effective in such a place than our own would be,"[39] since the Empire's credibility had been shattered by its staggering war losses, notably in Singapore.

Yet it was not just U.S. broadcasters or U.S.-oriented broadcasters being deemed to be more reliable in providing simple news of the war, their entertainment programs—thought widely to be mere fluff—may too have been subversive of the Empire. "It is essential to ensure that the use of recorded American serial broadcasts such as the Bob Hope, Jack Benny and other programmes, does

not become a Frankenstein," it was advised sternly in August 1944. Worse, this encroachment may have been inspired by London since there was "no original listeners' enthusiasm for such programmes; it has grown because of BBC's persistence…"[40] It seemed that London was in full flight in the ether before this reality hit the ground with one official warning, "we do not want the leading U.S. network orchestras" occupying their airwaves: "we must be careful to see that we do not become an agent for American cultural propaganda. We already know that our rebroadcasters are being swamped with American transcriptions."[41]

Soon, the BBC was stalking the counterparts of its presumed ally, noting in early 1945 that NBC (National Broadcasting Company) "will lose its present prominence in American radio and will eventually die of a surfeit of misdirected commercialism."[42] Just after the war began, one BBC official observed that "there is definitely growing in this country [the United Kingdom] an anti-American feeling" over the war, and this perception was both reflected within the BBC itself and was an aspect of a growing U.S. challenge to the Empire itself.[43] During this period of anxiety in Nairobi and in London, the U.S. representative in the region made "suggestions to allay British East African fears regarding American postwar interests in this area" but in conceding that allaying these apprehensions "will not be easy," he confirmed that the war had inflicted a mighty blow on the Empire from which it would not recover.[44]

This blow was also partially self-inflicted, or so thought Washington. European colonizers long had thought that—lynching and Jim Crow aside—the United States was veritably subversive and dangerously naïve when it came to colonized Africa, since African Americans had a network of colleges and universities that allowed for higher education and maintained businesses that allowed, if need be, for funding of political activity and progressive philanthropy. The colonizers never seemed to recognize the difference between maintaining a colony of Africans thousands of miles from home and maintaining a minority of Africans cheek-by-jowl in one's backyard. Thus, the United States was better positioned to make the adjustment toward the colonized that the war demanded, which could only make them appear more civilized to indigenes and, correspondingly, leave the colonizers in bad odor. In short, Washington thought London was inflexibly insensitive toward the colonized, while the United Kingdom had criticisms all its own about U.S. racial policies.

Thus, in late 1943, as the fate of the Empire hung in the balance, Washington's man in Nairobi spoke derisively of the "bitter attitude normally held by most Europeans in British East Africa against Asians," which was not useful given Tokyo's direct racial appeal to them.[45] It was not Washington, after all, that had to make adjustments to colonialism, making it easier for these U.S. consuls to pontificate about what needed to be done. Thus, the Consul in Mombasa attended the First Inter-Territorial Conference of the Indian Community of Kenya, Uganda, Tanganyika and Zanzibar, which occurred in Mwanza. Worriedly, Ralph Miller observed that it was "marked by an atmosphere of extreme hostility to the local Colonial Governments and the BRITISH settlers…" [emphasis-original] Angrily, the keynoter asserted, "never to trust them," while to "remove the color bar" was put forward as a chief demand. Nervously, Miller remarked that "friction between

the white settlers and the East African Indians" had "been constantly increasing since the outbreak of war." The tiny settler community apparently had forgotten that "Indians control over nine-tenths of the retail trade of East Africa" and were in a position to impose pain on the European minority, and had "not failed to make capital out of the world situation and the trend in public opinion in favor of racial equality…" Tellingly at this important confab, there was talk of the "support which they expected from the United States in attaining the independence of India and equal rights for Indians in East Africa," with the implication being Washington could be grouped for castigation with the settlers and London if that did not occur. Seeking to manipulate the major powers, there was also "talk in a general way of the East African Indian community as a whole entering into closer commercial and cultural relations with the United States to supplant their pre-war relations with Great Britain"—which was sweet music to the ears of many in Washington.[46]

The war had placed an enormous strain on the relationship between London and Washington; like an old and quarreling married couple, they simply had difficulty in seeing the other's viewpoint. Washington's view of "whiteness" was more capacious than that in London, which tended to use this important racial category as a disguise to obscure a bias toward the English—or so many an Irishman and Scot might have argued. Thus, after Miller's bracing encounter in Mwanza, his deputy in Mombasa, George F. Bogardus, became concerned when the Kenya police "brought up the subject of the Lepow Brothers (Raymond J. and Benjamin) citing them as examples of Jewish businessmen who did 'not play the game' as other businessmen." They were U.S. nationals accused of illegally trapping leopards in the region. "I, of course," said Bogardus high-mindedly "took no part" in this official's "anti-Semitic observations."[47]

Simultaneously, though Washington's men were privately critical of the general outlook of the settlers, the latter had few complaints when they visited the United States itself. When Colin Maher of the colony's Department of Agriculture visited the United States shortly after the war had begun, he was singing hosannas of praise to his hosts. "I was rendered every facility and treated with the utmost courtesy and kindness," he chortled and "not merely [greeted] as a visiting official but welcomed as a friend."[48] Such attitudes made it easier for Washington to oust London from its sedan chair presiding over the Empire when a parched Britain faced a dispiriting postwar world.

As for London, it felt that Washington could afford to be high-minded when its direct interests were not at issue or in play. For when it came to the defense of a putrid Jim Crow, London's representative in Washington was "surprised by the complacency expressed in the South with regard to the coloured problem." Traveling in this continental sized nation in July 1942, he acknowledged that a "warm welcome awaited any British official." Yet he kept coming back to the nation's chief internal problem: "I found little apprehension in the South," he said dazedly "on the subject of possibilities of trouble with the coloured population." Certainly, this was troubling news though it was inevitably coupled with the dual idea that "characteristic of the South" he found "little criticism of British colonial policy and no particular desire to see the principles of the Atlantic Charter applied to the Far East"[49]—which was good news indeed.

Maybe due to their conflict-ridden relations with African Americans, London sought to engage this community. The BBC in 1943 was told with concern that "the chief fact that emerges from this study of opinion of 4000 white and colored people in 5 U.S. cities is that Negro and white stand diametrically opposite each other on the race problem." Though it was considered, the BBC was informed that "an informational policy can do little to bring the two together"; "most whites" were "willing to give them equal wages or job opportunities," though "less than 1 in 200 believes they should be allowed to go to the same places" and the "overwhelming majority of the whites favor segregation not only in the armed forces but on buses and cars, in restaurants and in housing zones…" Worrisome still was that "on almost all issues, Northern Negroes indicate much more dissatisfaction than do Southern Negroes," who were thought to be doing worse.[50]

The BBC, which operated as a kind of above ground intelligence agency for London, disconsolately told the Foreign Office that "the American whites have no understanding at all of the true nature of the Negro problem and this bodes ill for the future."[51] In response, Whitehall contemplated sponsoring a "sort of Round Table Conference on the Colour Question,"[52] though the Dixiecrats who bolstered the ruling Democratic Party would have objected.

So London was in a bind, wanting to question the complacency of the South when it came to the pressing matter of confronting Jim Crow—which, it was thought, could complicate the attempt to blunt Japan's racial appeals—yet elated that this complacency could also mean little or no real challenge to their own color-coded colonialism.

Perhaps to twit Washington or, perhaps, to appeal to their own African subjects without actually confronting their difficult plight, London during the war sought at times to place African Americans in a positive light; perhaps, as well, this could also neutralize any animosity this growingly important minority might bear toward the Empire. Thus, in early 1944 the BBC featured a 60-minute, all-Negro show dealing with the story of the London blitz through Negro eyes with a script by Langston Hughes, the leading African American writer. "Paul Robeson and the Hall Johnston Choir have been definitely booked," it was said with enthusiasm. "Other Negro artists being booked are Josh White, blues singer, Ethel Waters and Canada Lee," premier performers all.[53]

Too much can be made, however, of Washington's apparent concern for the plight of the indigenes. As the war was winding down in 1945, the consul general in Nairobi bluntly stated his nation's interests: "it is likely," he prognosticated, "that British Europeans will continue to dominate this zone for a long time—at least for a generation or two." This was fine with Washington since the "basic American interest results from a continued support of a British Imperial Policy encouraging white civilization under Western European auspices—especially in contrast to encouraging Asian (read 'Indian') civilization…" Of course, there was that "limiting" factor "arising from the natural interest of American Negroes in the promotion of the welfare of the people of their race in these territories where they outnumber the Europeans and Asians some sixty to one…" With a stunning honesty, rarely displayed before or since, it was acknowledged frankly that

the "special demands of the colored people of the United States…are not always the same as those of white Americans out here."[54]

The problem for the apostles of white supremacy was that Japan's challenge, inter alia, had undermined profoundly this racist philosophy. Burma was the key battlefront in this regard, as it remained the key to destabilizing both India and China—where the plurality of humanity resided—and according to official sources, the Anglo-American advance was "made possible by hardened African Infantry," whose difficult task was made all the more complicated since they were central to the "first monsoon operation ever attempted"—and "the African was the perfect soldier to carry it out…" Alongside these words were pictures that might have seemed ominous in another context and would be deemed so a few years later—grim-faced Africans fingering "Bren gun[s]" and "Howitzers." Even the tag-line that they "enjoy killing Japs [*sic*]" may not have been altogether reassuring.[55]

Months before the bombing of Hiroshima, Major General William Dimoline of the Empire, who was based in Nairobi, in halting words spoke agitatedly of an African battalion due to ship out soon for Asia. There was a "certain amount of trouble" with them and "they would require watching," since their "state of discipline" was "NOT satisfactory." [emphasis-original] A large percentage of these men consisted of young Somalis, whose militancy caused them to be "segregated from other troops both in Somaliland and Kenya. The Somalis," he opined "are of a very proud and independent nature, and tend to look down on other African soldiers, regarding them as Pagans, they themselves being very strict Mohammedans…" Thus, there had been a "direct refusal to obey orders by about 30 malcontents over the digging of offal pits by themselves, for animals slaughtered by them, according to Mohammedan custom." Then there was their "refusal to carry large packs [in] training…" Hence, he was reluctant to ship them to the complex battlefield that was Burma: "I explained," he insisted that the "Somalis could NOT be counted on to sit in positions and hold them under heavy shelling and mortaring" for "they are nomads and hate regimentation and [are] 'bad mixers.' They have a great contempt," he asserted, "for anyone who is NOT a Somali"; plus, "the fact that they speak Somali and NOT Swahili mitigates against their relationship with other African races." [emphasis-original][56] Simon Maclachlan, who served with the British military, said that the Somalis in the King's African Rifles were "more inclined" to "committing various atrocities" due to their "characteristics and nature…"[57] Besides, that armed African troops were guarding Italian prisoners-of-war in the region, was not exactly the most brilliant endorsement of white supremacy.

Yet the Empire continued to conduct its business as if the war in which they were enmeshed had not happened. The journal of the East African command, for example, amidst the numerous sexualized images of women, indulged in caricatures of Africans with outsized white lips.[58] One noticeably prominent cartoon pictured an African rushing to eat with utensils in hand, then in the next frame quickly discarding them and eating from his plate canine-style. A few pages later the alleged incompetence of African truck and convoy drivers was held up for ridicule.[59] In another issue, the African American band-leader, Cab Calloway

and his "language of jive" was subjected to the abuse of ill-humor, while disparaging cartoons about blackface "Kentucky minstrels" despoiled these pages.[60] London was seeking to execute the tricky task of relying upon despised Africans to rescue the Empire while continuing to portray them in an inferior manner so that white supremacy could be perpetuated. This was neither easy nor possible.

Hence, the pressures of war had served to allow Africans and African Americans to engage in various forms of revolt against their respective plights, which—ironically—caused London and Washington to look at times with more sensitivity toward the pressing problems besetting the other. This did not bode well for colonialism nor Jim Crow, as the continuation of the war and the early postwar dispensation were to demonstrate convincingly.

6

Colonialism Confronted

From his comfortable perch in Nairobi, Major General William Dimoline was in an advantageous position to ascertain the destiny of the Empire he had served so faithfully and altruistically. Berlin and Rome had been vanquished and Tokyo's fate seemed to be doomed by July 1945 but a battered London was hardly untouched by the carnage. Being stationed in one of the few metropolises to be surrounded by game parks featuring not-so-tame wildlife may have heightened the sense of imminent danger he detected when reading the words of his comrade, Major F.N. Burnham, writing from Gloucestershire, England. Burnham had recently spent four years in Africa and thus was uniquely positioned to assess both and his conclusion was blunt: "it is my conviction," he stated beseechingly, "that the future of the British Empire and Commonwealth lies in Africa…" A perspicacious Major Burnham could see already that "we are in the process of losing India as a market. The Pacific war is an American war and quite rightly, after it, the lion's share of Chinese and Far East markets will go to America, not us," he added perceptively. Now he was suggesting sending a "number of people to Africa [who] will make things easier in Great Britain later…" As he saw it, Africa—with Kenya as the foundation—should be incorporated more closely into the immediate plans of London. Thus, "in the face of the German threat the Russians put their war industries behind the Urals": "Africa must [be] the Urals of Great Britain," he insisted. But what about the incommodious conditions on this notoriously difficult continent? So what?—was his basic response." Most important—"Africa is potentially far richer than India" But there was a potential spanner in the works: it was "no secret that the United States expects the world [to] be her potential empire" and Africa was London's "last chance" to compete.[1]

The problem for these exalted plans for Africa's future was their failure to take into account for the Africans themselves. Moreover, the unemployed that Burnham noted in passing were simply an indicator of a devastated Britain that was hardly in a position to halt the political earthquake it confronted in postwar Africa. Then there was the erstwhile ally in Washington, which Burnham sensed correctly did not necessarily see reestablishing the Empire as a priority, since it had ideas of empire all its own. But even the United States, largely untouched by

a war that had bloodied its major rivals, had to confront its very own population of African descent, which too had been empowered by the war and, likewise, was in no mood to return to the status quo ante.

Moreover, big picture thinking was not only emerging in Gloucestershire. Similar thoughts were percolating in Nairobi—but in the U.S. Consulate—for it was there that Joseph Touchette acknowledged the importance of Kenya. A "crystallization" had occurred indicating that this "area is destined in the not distant future to become the 'turn-table' of Empire defense and the hyphen or link building a greater British Africa comprising the Union of South Africa and the Rhodesias to the south with prospective Greater Somalia to the north…"[2]

Despite this recognition of Africa's role in London's imperial strategy, the United States was slow to ramp up its presence on the continent commensurately. A year after the war had ended, J. William Henry, who represented U.S. interests in Mombasa, was engaged in a typical activity: complaining. "I have felt almost lost at this post," he whined, "which is so far off the beaten path that I rarely ever see another Foreign Service Officer and virtually never have an opportunity of talking with anyone from the Department…"[3] This was untimely, given events. For as the war was concluding, a self-proclaimed "Yank" in Kenya noted that a "minor furor has been raging" in light of some settlers' crusade to "expel all the foreigners who have come here"—which seemed to mean U.S. nationals in the first place. What was driving this expulsion/movement seemed to be simple jealousy—"I have heard a great deal of criticism about the lavish way in which American soldiers live overseas"; it was said that "they have too much money…" Well, the Yankees had their own list of complaints: "in many British camps (not in East Africa)," he concluded triumphantly, "old and odiferous films are controlled by private concessions. Why?"[4] Why indeed. On the other hand, Nairobi had to be careful about whipping up hostility against Euro-Americans, not only because of the Empire's debilitated state and concomitant need for allies.[5]

It was not long after the war's end that the U.S. secretary of state received from Nairobi a packet of newspaper clippings from the local press "derogative to the United States." The U.S. consul was aghast at the portrait of his nation, "pictured to be the 'fat and prosperous owner of a huge department store' unable to maintain the sale of its goods other than through means of a 'post-UNRA [Foreign] Aid Bill'," a device seen among settlers to promote the purchase of U.S. merchandise that would otherwise be ignored. Washington wasn't buying this line of thinking, however. The Empire and its minions, it was said, "cannot recover from the idea that today Britain does not lead the world in economic, diplomatic, naval and air affairs…"[6] In 1946, an exasperated Washington prepared a "secret" 29-page report on "violation of United States treaty rights in British East Africa," a preemptive strike against the fading self-importance of the Empire.[7]

Suitably softened up, Nairobi acquiesced to the arrival on its shores of Caltex, the U.S. oil giant,[8] as U.S. tobacco interests—which had established a prewar foothold,[9] continued their encroachment,[10] just as U.S. construction firms were able to compete effectively for tenders.[11] Yet as time passed, U.S. complaints about obstructions to its commercial expansion increased accordingly.[12] Thus, U.S. diplomat, Richard Mulcahy, felt obliged to "regret to inform" one U.S. firm

"that the prospects for the importation of toilet paper from the United States into these areas are not bright or present" since "Kenya Protectorate, Seychelles and Mauritius suffer from an acute dollar shortage…"[13]

In the postwar era, the British consul in New Orleans was complaining of the "difficulty" of his nation's "dollar position…" As if he were an overextended pensioner—rather than the representative of an overextended Empire—he moaned that "every effort has been made by me to keep [every] expenditure, as well as more personal outlay, within bounds…" As the pound was gyrating, he was left to complain about the "steady rise in the cost of living in this country…"[14] "The American trader finds it most difficult to do business," said the U.S. vice consul in Mombasa in September 1946, "owing to the rigid import restrictions, exchange controls and other measures enacted during the war…"[15] To compete in the postwar world, the Empire needed dollars—which could not be printed but had to be earned—which made dollar drain[16] a real and pressing matter.

How could London and Washington coordinate a united strategy vis-à-vis Africans and African Americans if they were bickering over basic issues? An underlying problem was that not being a colonial power in Africa provided Washington with ample flexibility that London simply did not possess. Plus, it had to contend with an increasingly energetic lobby of African Americans, which too recognized how the war had weakened the racist magic that sustained imperialism. This allowed the United States, for example, to cater to Ethiopia in a way that was difficult for the Empire to duplicate—which simply brought more conflict between London and Washington.[17] Similarly, a weakened Empire attained a catastrophic victory, when it had to consider seizing Italian Somaliland.[18] Surely the Empire would be hard-pressed to administer this vast region without Washington's assistance.

Such thoughts had occurred to the Somali indigene, Abdullah Geilah, who wanted a U.S. protectorate. Geilah had reached his eighty-fourth year and had lived abroad, particularly in the United States and Alaska, for about forty-five years. He reported that "when the present British Governor travels about this country, he is greeted by the populace with shouts of obscene epithets…"[19]

Yet London sought vainly to hold on to the gains brought by its catastrophic victory, fighting a losing battle against the inevitable—bowing out gracefully as Washington stepped in. Thus, when U.S. consul Edward Groth met with the leader of the Empire's East African Command, Lt. General Sir Arthur Dowler, he was immediately struck by the extent of Washington's impending triumph since this British leader was actually born in Staten Island, suggesting once more how the Empire simply did not have enough "whites" and had to rely on the more populous United States. On the strategic level, Groth recognized instantly that Sir Arthur's "forces are far too thinly spread over the tremendous area," and thus he had "to rely too heavily on native military organizations, as the East African Rifles…" Shockingly, he had only two aircraft at his disposal in the entire region stretching "from the Straits of Bab el Mandab [*sic*] to and including the Rhodesias."[20]

Sir Arthur, who may not have shed altogether his sympathies for the place of his birth, apparently told Groth that "few Britishers [*sic*] realize how very poor

Great Britain is today…" Thus, when staff from Sinclair Oil arrived in the region, they were protected by Ethiopian troops though they desired what was simply unavailable: British troops.[21]

As time passed, Washington became increasingly less tolerant of London's pretensions. The United States was becoming less willing to humor the Empire, though—it was noted condescendingly, "owing to their economic exigencies, we have been quite indulgent of the British until now…"[22] As Washington saw it, London was in deep denial, unwilling to acknowledge what the U.S. diplomat Edward Groth thought was obvious—the "British Empire is in a state of disintegration" he said in 1949 without the slightest hint of regret.[23]

The still haughty Empire was not predisposed to accept supinely these slaps in the face. It was in November 1949 that Washington sent a top diplomat to a "Remembrance Day" ceremony in Nairobi, "in honor of those who gave their lives in World Wars I and II," yet their consular officials could not secure to their dismay "definite places reserved for them…" In an apparent retaliation and comeuppance, they were consigned to "stand in one of the two roped enclosures" as again "indifference toward foreign consular officers is a familiar characteristic of the official British mind throughout the Empire," it was reported.[24]

But Washington's patience was not inexhaustible, it could be extinguished—which ironically was revealed in a battle over pesticides. In the prewar years pyrethrum from Kenya was an important insecticide, notably in the United States and was relied on by farmers but the discovery of DDT during the war led to large-scale spraying, particularly in the Southern states. Then it was found that DDT resistant strains of flies and other insects were appearing in ever greater numbers—which gave a belated boost to pyrethrum. Buoyed, its producers in Kenya sought to band together their counterparts in Congo and Tanganyika to increase their bargaining leverage, which Washington charged violated the Sherman Anti-trust Act. This may have been small potatoes for the United States but for East Africa it was not, as pyrethrum was a major dollar earner and Nairobi was loath to back down.[25]

R.C. Gilfillan had arrived in the colony in 1916[26] from the United States and thought he was a man of standing there. But a year after the war ended, he was bubbling over with complaints. The "Hydraulic Vehicle Hoists and Air Compressors" he peddled once dominated the Tanganyika market but now he could hardly secure an import license: the intention, he said, was to "force our American lines out of the market in favour of those from the United Kingdom…"[27]

What was the point of having an Empire, it was thought in London, if one did not have "imperial preference" of various sorts? Washington thought otherwise: what was the point of having an alliance, what exactly was the point of rescuing this Empire from the ignominious fate slated by Tokyo and Berlin if the United States was to be treated in a discriminatory fashion when it came to the most important matter of all: business. Months after the war had ended, the U.S. secretary of state was told directly that even beeswax had to be exported to the United Kingdom—and not the United States.[28]

For its part, London was concerned that its marketing arrangement for sisal might be challenged by Washington.[29] The United States wanted direct access to

this East African commodity but the Empire insisted that access could only be granted via London. It was "comforting to know" said one Empire bureaucrat gloatingly, "that our old fears that American private companies might press the State Department to criticize our present marketing arrangements seem to have been ill-founded."[30]

Flummoxed in their attempt to penetrate the East African market, a number of Euro-Americans deemed the better part of wisdom would be to move there. Kenya was always on the lookout for the able-bodied melanin deficient, since it was not easy to attract the preferred English there. By 1948, as Africans were becoming more vocal about their oppression, the colonizers knew they had to augment their numbers if they were to survive. A census that year, the first since 1931 showed a meager 29, 660 Europeans; 5.2 million Africans and 98,000 Indians and Goans; this, said the analyst, C.S. Nicholls, "made whites 0.55 per cent of the population." Yet, as tensions rose, so did the migration of those of "pure European descent," to the point where there were 42,200 of them in 1953 and 57,700 by 1957, which caused a welcome problem for the beset colonizer—a housing shortage.[31] Naturally, the Jim Crow United States provided a goodly number. This was manna from heaven for a settler colony which knew that Africans returning from war were hardly happy to return to the miseries of old and, thus, colonialism needed bolstering[32]—though it is not evident that this stemmed Washington-London conflict.

The year of the census and afterward seemed to bring a spike in applicants for migration, no doubt prompted by pump-priming by the "European Settlement Board." The ambitious Edward S. Doyle of Philadelphia, expressed interest in coffee plantations for sale.[33] The equally enthusiastic Alfred J. Langmayer of Cleveland gushed that "Kenya Colony offers great promise for white colonization and economic growth,"[34] a sentiment echoed by Robert Hyland of Chicago and his fiancé,[35] along with A.K. Jensen.[36]

There were variations on this theme of unclouded sunshine to be found in Kenya. Charles Pope of Homestead, Florida, carped about the cost of land.[37] One potential migrant sought to flee the U.S. Zone in Germany for Kenya owing to a "new wave of anti-Semitism"; he chose not to comment on the irony of fleeing anti-Semitism for a land baked in racism.[38]

This trend of Jewish refugees flocking to Kenya was another postwar trend that while it may have bolstered in some sense the number of European settlers, may have served to undermine white supremacy given the often parlous circumstances that greeted them. As these potential migrants from the United States began their inquiries, there were already—according to United Nations sources—"hundreds" of "families, wives [and] children of Jewish exiles in Kenya…"[39] By mid-1948, this included "Jews from Palestine," who were "detained in Gilgil Camp, Kenya" on "suspicion of being members of Terrorist Organization[s] or engaged in terrorist activities"; moved around like pieces on a chessboard, they were then "transferred" to the then Ethiopian province of Eritrea.[40] Strikingly, Ralph Bunche, who by then had long since departed from his previous home on the left, was a principal U.N. officer involved in these maneuvers.

These refugees had little reason to be pleased with his ministrations. They complained of their bitter experiences in Kenya; terming themselves "inmates" and disputing the idea they were "dangerous people"; they sorrowfully recounted how "many here…have been detained for seven and eight years." This, they argued, was "violating the most elementary human rights" of the 260 detainees and was increasing their "suffering." Instead, they insisted on "the holy right of every Jew to enter his Homeland," referring to Palestine—not Kenya, where they had been slated decades earlier—"and live there."[41] The tawdry treatment of European Jewry, consigned to barren detention camps, was not the best advertisement for white supremacy. Some indigenes may have recalled this was nothing new. An occasion when missionaries and settlers were united in a common cause occurred when Zionists planned to establish a Jewish homeland in Kenya.[42]

As for the Africans of Kenya, they realized more than most how the war had altered the colonial calculus. One Rhodesian analyst observed that this conflict had been the biggest challenge for colonialism since the end of the African Slave Trade.[43] Few in Nairobi would have disagreed with this portentous assessment. Major General Dimoline was informed that his military superior was "very disturbed at the reports of Africans" in New Delhi, where they were posted, "misbehaving toward our Sisters…" In the United States such presumed frisky aggressiveness had been the cause of lynchings—and worse. This too was the inclination in India where "the men tried to get in bed with the Sisters"; the "culprits were East Africans." Thus, the "conclusion" had been reached that "the askari had forfeited his right to care [for] our white womenfolk in the future," because of the "inter-race feeling" that had been "engendered"—this could jeopardize potentially the entire colonial project. The proposed solution to halt the manhandling of European women rested in "the raising of an African Women's Nursing Corps, officered by a few very senior and experienced European Nursing Officers,"[44] which suggested how the war had opened up opportunities and, equally, how the segregationist impulse had not been extinguished. If supposed African aggressiveness had been limited to nuns, perhaps it could have been dismissed but as Major General Dimoline saw it, "the relation between African ranks and our women has certainly deteriorated during this war, and it is up to us to see that nothing is done which will further impair the position."[45] Serving in India also provided an opportunity for indigenes to gain a better understanding of their compatriots in Kenya with roots in the sub-continent. "The askari have been astonished at the size and variety of India's races and the vastness of her communications," averred one Empire official months after the war had concluded.[46] The resultant feistiness of the Africans was noticed in Nairobi. When the British officer, Richard Miers, who commanded a detachment of the battle-hardened King's African Rifles, arrived in this growing city in early 1946, they were "met by all the world and his wife," while the "troops [celebrated] until the windows rattled"; it was a "really splendid welcome," he thought.[47]

As it turned out, it was not solely the windows that were "rattled" by the war. Africans got to see the world, at times were armed or taught skills, like driving, that theretofore had been alien to them—all this could prove useful in confronting colonialism. They were able to encounter other Africans, similarly situated,

which allowed for the sharing of complaints and intelligence. Thus, Kenyan indigenes toiled for five years alongside those of the Congo, with a good deal of this time spent in Burma,[48] where African Americans were to be found in droves as Tokyo made special appeals to them all. Thus, a scant year after the war had concluded, a U.S. official in Nairobi spoke about "an awakening among a large number of Africans," since "they had enough of regimentation by the controlling white race…" If "this trend augments," he warned solemnly, "the timid cry of today might soon reach a roar." The "war has opened new visions," he declared accurately, as "hundreds of thousands of native East African soldiers in the East African Command have fought during the last few years in Ethiopia, Burma and other lands…" Of similar consequence was the unavoidable fact that "Europeans have lost 'face' in having to call upon the black Africans to assist them in vanquishing the enemies of, to them, the governing British race and, by inference, all other whites…"[49]

Almost on cue, the U.S. consul, Joseph Touchette, posted a letter to headquarters from the indigene, Kagabilo Muleba, wherein it was advised that "colour discrimination" would "cause another war…" In Burma it was said, a "whiteman [*sic*] was trying his level best to colour himself so that he may look Black," so how could they then come back to Kenya and seek to fortify white supremacy?[50] He could have added—as the Kenyan-American, Barack Obama, did—that during the war indigenes had encountered "blacks from America who flew airplanes and performed surgery" and, thus, many had come to realize that these skills were not a product exclusively of white supremacy but adequate opportunity.[51]

Sir Anthony Swann, a former District Commissioner in Nyeri, who arrived on the continent in 1936, agreed about the transforming nature of the war. The indigenes, he said, "had seen the world outside East Africa for the first time," as many traveled to "Ceylon and eventually to Burma." Though poorly paid, many saved their hard-earned wages and "formed companies" upon their return home; for example, "ten or so would buy a taxi, a bus and run it…" As he saw it, this may have exacerbated tensions in unintended ways since "in the war, practically no Kikuyus had been enlisted…"[52] Since, according to Sir John Cumber—who arrived in Kenya in 1946 as a district officer—the "Kikuyus [were] the sort of Jews of Kenya" [*sic*], i.e., they were "industrious" with a "very early exposure to white missionaries" and to "Asian trading methods" and "the use of money," the war may have undermined the monetary advantage they had held over ethnic groups.[53] John Hewlett Nunneley, who fought in Burma on behalf of the Empire, was more hostile toward the askaris, as he inferentially suggested why their experience may have motivated resentment, terming them "mercenaries." He could not forget the "horror of an askari tossing a hand grenade into the officers' mess with fatal results…" He served alongside the notorious "General China" of "Mau Mau" fame and recollected some aspects of the experience that were curious: "African troops were not allowed to speak English. All conversations had to be in Swahili…"[54] Alan L.K. Liddle who worked with the King's African Rifles also recalled "very, very few" Kikuyus in that detachment.[55]

Of course, as a Nairobi Consul had suggested, African Americans had their own unique foreign policy agenda and it was not necessarily consonant with

that of Washington. By 1944, the diminutive and elderly human rights leader, W.E.B. Du Bois, had returned to the organization he had founded—the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP)—as a kind of minister of Foreign Affairs, bent on shaping the war and postwar dispensation to the desires of his constituency. In the midst of the Great War, he had suggested famously that it was driven by lust for that which Africa possessed and, as he saw it, this remained a factor. It was the unlamented African Slave Trade and its handmaiden colonialism that had driven the Industrial Revolution and the modernization of Europe and the Americas, which were "of far greater significance than social scientists like to admit…" "Unless this question of racial status is frankly and intelligently faced," he argued, "it will become a problem not simply of Africa but of the world." Du Bois took note of the fact that when the U.S. president spoke eloquently of the "Four Freedoms," he did not necessarily contemplate Africa, ditto for his celebrated "Atlantic Charter."[56] Even before the war concluded, the otherwise staid Foreign Policy Association of the United States concluded that "the war has made Americans conscious of Africa as they never were before."[57]

Like his comrade, Du Bois, Paul Robeson also had ideas about how this confluence of African and African American interests could be propelled further as a consequence of the war. An apparent Empire agent, Horst Ammon, had been in correspondence recently with the actor-activist, "in connexion [*sic*] with publication of a vernacular newspaper for Africans. Although 100,000 [pounds] is considered to be necessary for this purpose"—a hefty sum by any measure—apparently Robeson's view was that "money is no obstacle." Similarly worrisome was that Robeson "has established yet another contact with influential Africans (notably Jomo Kenyatta and Muchohi Gikonyo)…"[58] Eslanda Robeson also had not eluded London's attention, as the police in Ghana in a "confidential" report, took note when she was "reported to be considering paying a visit to the British West African colonies…"[59]

More than most, the Kenyan authorities long had been concerned about the prospect of African Americans paying visits. The prospect of unauthorized visits to Mombasa by African American seamen had riveted attention in Nairobi since the earliest days. It was in 1904 that the authorities passed the "Foreign Seamen Deserters Ordinance," which thoughtfully only applied to those "not being a slave…"[60] Like their African counterparts, Kenyans too were looking forward to a sweeping change of their depressed condition as a result of their war sacrifice and were none too pleased when their often modest demands were met with unyielding resistance. Thus, when the Negro seamen John Louis Ross was discovered in Kenya without a visa, there was concern about his intentions on both sides of the Atlantic. It was late 1948 when he was detained: the U.S. and Kenyan authorities alike were displeased with his "principal activity" in Nairobi, which was "the fomenting of political agitation among the Africans…"[61] That he had spent time in Jinja, Uganda, a traditional stronghold of unrest was deemed to be of relevance by Nairobi, which busily shared intelligence with Washington.[62] The United States sent an official to attend his trial[63] though it was unclear if Washington and Nairobi were pleased or not when their investigation of him

revealed that Ross had been in an "industrial reformatory" in Jefferson City, Missouri, because of charges of "robbery," along with "other arrests" for "intoxication and vagrancy…"[64]

Whatever the case, the apprehension about Ross' arrival was given resonance by the realization that Africans and African Americans were unwilling to accept colonialism and its brutal sidekick, white supremacy. That was the import of the Pan-African Congress in 1945, chaired by Du Bois, that gathered at a spot where the colonial power could easily engage in close monitoring and surveillance: Manchester. Kenyatta was given a prominent and expansive role there.[65]

This was a further headache for the colonizers, who had to worry that the militancy that was clearly proliferating in Kenya might become a regional contagion. Washington, which expressed nervousness about this situation when it was not seeking to profit from it, acknowledged the problem. It was during the war that Paul Alling, chief of the Division of Near Eastern Affairs, observed that more progress had been made in British West Africa in adjusting wage scales upward than in East Africa. It was also true that "more encouragement in the organization of trade unions has been given by the Colonial Office to West Africa." A reason for the difference was the presence of "white settlers" in the east. He also knew that the rise of unions "will have a bearing on the growth of African nationalism" and because of the settlers, who unlike bureaucrats were reluctant to pack their bags and decamp to Britain—or North America—this would be "more serious in East Africa"; this would mean unions and virtually all forms of collective resistance "might be more strenuously combated" in a place like Kenya.[66]

As it turned out, Paul Alling was prescient—Nairobi did seek to squash the trade union movement with its pent-up demands—and the smashing of this class-based form of organization probably gave a fillip to Kikuyu nationalism, just as the postwar persecution of Du Bois and Robeson set the stage for the rise of varying forms of nationalism in Black America.[67] Hence, less than eighteen months after the war's explosive end, a massive strike hit Mombasa, which even Washington's delegate acknowledged was "astonishingly well-organized." The settlers were "wholly unprepared" for this in virtually every sense, though they quickly adapted, helping further to conflate "race" and class, which proved to be their downfall, as "virtually every able-bodied European" scabbed and helped to break the strike. "The Europeans believe that this will teach the Africans that they are not indispensable." The leaders of this job action—who were believed to be "African ex-servicemen"—were driven "underground" instead of engaged,[68] which proved to be a gross error, providing Africans with the sly skills of the surreptitious as the class-based option was foreclosed.[69] Mombasa 1947, which built upon and surpassed previous expressions of militancy,[70] also proved to be a turning point in the ongoing effort to confront colonialism itself.[71] Thus, before Mombasa 1947, the colony had endured a spate of suspicious and destructive fires[72] and these did not dissipate after this turning point.

Subsequently Washington acknowledged that Mombasa 1947 left Uncle Sam "caught with his pants down," blithely unaware of the churning in the colony, though the steadily growing "American shipping interests" were affected directly. "I do not want any Pearl Harbors here" again, the top diplomat in this port city

was instructed.[73] But with a diplomatic corps as homogeneous racially and otherwise as the settler class, Washington was hard-pressed to adapt to emerging realities.

Still, even a Euro-American who was clinically blind—and eerily oblivious to his own nation's similar problems—could easily see that there were dangerous fault-lines in Kenya. As the second half of the twentieth century was about to unfold, the leading U.S. official in Nairobi was seized with concern about the "African-European problem," for if this "pressing problem is not reasonably approached…especially on the part of the Europeans," then inevitably "there must eventually be profound trouble in this part of the world"—"there will be a terrible and bloody clash," he predicted. The settlers had yet to recognize that the "'good old days' will never return," the war had transformed the region. Perhaps worse was that—rhetoric aside—the settlers were not really committed to their much professed white (or European) supremacy. "Being largely British," they did "not look with favour on any plan which will foster emigration from countries on the European continent…" Touching on a gaping though unacknowledged fissure in the racial project, he recognized that the settlers wished to "maintain British, rather than European supremacy," which was another way of saying that despite the Empire's abject decline, they hesitated to acquiesce further to Washington. Reverting to Washington's habit of hypocritical racial criticism of the Empire, Edward M. Groth pointed out that "when in London, the Agha Khan," a leading religious figure with roots in Kenya, "is entertained by the King in Buckingham Palace, but he may not cross the threshold of the Nairobi Club"—he neglected to note, of course, whether he could be admitted to the leading private clubs in Washington. Yet Groth had a point when he assailed the "general reactionary attitude" that was "held by the majority of 'European' settlers, businessmen and others in East Africa…"[74]—for they had made peaceful change virtually impossible and therefore made violent change veritably inevitable, an aphorism that Washington itself could have well considered as it entered the tumultuous 1960s.

7

Mau Mau Looms

The war had changed everything—except the way the settlers thought. They persisted in seeking to maintain the bad old days of racial privilege though Africans had shown this was not a good idea. Washington could have exerted more pressure on the colonizers but its own putrid Jim Crow made it hardly the best advertisement for enlightenment. Thus, as the months ticked off on the death march to the invocation of the State of Emergency in the Fall of 1952, Washington did not exert the leverage that its enhanced status—and the Empire's decline—suggested. African Americans could have pushed Washington in a more realistic direction but the onset of the Cold War and the Red Scare ensnared the most vocal tribunes—Du Bois and Robeson in the first place—as the message sunk in that opposition to the racist and colonialist status quo could easily be misinterpreted as being in the pay of Moscow. For the war's end had brought another conflict—the Cold War—and, consequently, the problems of East Africa had to be refracted through a global prism and assessed as to whether or not Moscow might benefit. That Jomo Kenyatta had actually spent time in Moscow and was known to be close to Robeson was sufficient for Washington to dismiss him as a dangerous radical. That Kenyatta had actually signed the 1946 petition to the United Nations initiated by the Communist-influenced National Negro Congress, which charged the United States with severe human rights violations against African Americans, sent Washington spiraling headlong into conniptions.[1] This global outlook meant that there were no local issues—as such—which served to increase the importance of East Africa which sat astride strategic approaches to the Suez Canal and lush oil fields alike.[2]

It could not be said that Washington was unaware of the raging fire—at times, quite literally—that had descended on East Africa. The Ugandan, Semakula Mulumba, son of a landowner, received special scrutiny. He had joined forces, according to the U.S. consul in Nairobi, "with his relative 'Reuben Sparta' or 'Mugimba Spartas,'" who was "a violent anti-white Muganda Cleric of the 'African Orthodox Church,'" which was of special interest since it was "founded about 1921 by a certain George Alexander McGuire" in the United States "as a convenient organization for the dissemination of the political views of Marcus Garvey…" He seemed to represent Washington's worst nightmare—a confluence

of "Black" and "Red" since he apparently was in touch with Moscow. Despite his apparent willingness to work with Moscow, he was said to have engaged in "violent and often obscene vilification against all Europeans…" He was also reported to be Kenyatta's comrade and had returned to Uganda in 1946 on "the same ship" as the Kikuyu leader,[3] which reinforced pre-existing biases in Nairobi against Ugandans, notably Bagandans.[4]

Nairobi was the epicenter of British interests in the wider region and thus, inherited, the problems of its neighbors. Uganda was not the only example. Washington seemed more worried than London when twenty-two soldiers of the Mauritius Pioneer Corps were tried on a charge of mutiny in Kenya in 1949. Washington knew that when men subjected to iron discipline and the ossified injustice of military law rebelled nonetheless, that calamity loomed. Washington was worried that the colonizers were reacting like an ostrich—"a curious feature of this case is that no mention was made of it in the Mombasa papers"—which did not bode well.[5]

This premonition was bolstered when Washington considered a "Communist mutiny at Kilindini Naval Base, Mombasa" by the "Kenya Royal Navy Volunteer Forces." Allegations about Communist influence on Africans had long been a staple of discourse in Washington and the proclamation of the Cold War had placed this idea in overdrive, given Kenyatta's jaunts to Moscow, the influence upon him by Robeson and the like. Certainly focusing on the alleged treachery of the Reds could preclude intense scrutiny of white supremacy.[6] Desertions by African police[7] and complaints against the colonizers for searching huts without an order and generally harassing indigenes[8] were also occurring, prefiguring mass revolt.

Nairobi was worried that askaris realized all too well how they had saved colonialism from being overrun by Tokyo, among others, and now they should be rewarded as a result. The government "claimed that Government broadcasts had been harmful to the askaris by over-stressing the part played by him in the war and by not giving prominence to the part played by other peoples of the Empire. This had given the African askari a completely false idea of his own importance,"[9] according to a Nairobi report.

Increasingly alarmed, the United States sought to share its proliferating concern with their British counterparts but found that "colonial officials are unlikely to consider us as their colleagues." The U.S. consul in Nairobi said glumly. "If the truth were known, they resent our presence in these territories,"[10] a tendency reinforced by retrograde elements in London.[11]

The U.S. consul, Edward M. Groth—a good soldier—nonetheless took to heart his instructions about ferreting out Communist influence, even in the face of British colleagues who may have wished that he would disappear. So he met with the Nairobi police chief and left as alarmed about black militancy, as he had been about that of the red variety. He was told about a group of young Africans who had been "terrorizing picnicking Europeans in the nearby Langata Forest…" It seemed that whatever fear Africans had held of settlers—or white supremacy itself—was evaporating in the mist. Being from the United States, he suspected immediately that their motive was the "natural highly-sexed nature of

the African" before reverting to the current line, that is, whether "Communist leaders elsewhere were directing these attacks." The chief "confirmed that [was] his opinion, but added that much direction was not from Moscow but rather from London," which was barely comforting since men such as Kenyatta were known to have ties to both capitals.[12]

The settler regime tried to put up a brave front, though their own records showed a postwar increase in "anti-white" and "anti-government" propaganda,[13] not to mention anti-Empire propaganda.[14] Redolent of the distress mounting in Nairobi was the approach made by the police in Kenya to Washington. Though distrustful at best of the growing profile of the United States to the detriment of the Empire, in the Summer of 1949 Nairobi approached "an American missionary organization with the proposal that members of its staff become members of the [police] in the interest of their own safety…" The U.S. consul "suggested that [they] cooperate…"[15]

One reason for Groth's growing pessimism about the fate of white supremacy was not least the fact that the epochal independence of India in 1947 had altered racial calculations dramatically. "What India is [to] the British Empire," Pan-Africanist George Padmore declared, "Africa is to world imperialism…"[16] A fortiori, when India was removed from the Empire, imperialism, white supremacy, and all the rest were weakened correspondingly. This was the view of the farsighted; meanwhile, in Happy Valley, the colonial redoubt in Kenya, glee erupted when the French colonizers slaughtered tens of thousands in Madagascar in an atrocious massacre that gave heart to those who believed that the postwar upsurge of the indigenes could too be drowned in blood.[17]

As it turned out, the settlers should have been paying more attention to India than Madagascar—which they did: in their own way. Weeks before D-Day, a U.S. representative ambled into a political meeting of settlers, "all white people of course," he added superfluously. There were "80 or 85 present" but only one major subject: "the Indian Question."[18]

For South Asians, who long had been eyed with suspicion by Washington, as the primary threat to white supremacy and colonialism itself, seemed to live up to their billing as the State of Emergency approached. Quite cheekily in Washington's view, they demanded trials by jury for accused Indians and the simultaneous appointment of Indian magistrates.[19] With South Asians there was always the ominous possibility of contagion, given their presence in significant numbers in Kampala, Dar es Salaam, Durban, Port Louis—and, of course, Mombasa. "It has become almost axiomatic," said the U.S. representative in the latter city that "what happens in one of the British East African colonies soon happens in another…"[20]

If that were the case, white supremacists regionally should have been worried. By late 1946 one organ targeting the vast South Asian community lamented the "terrible shortage of skilled labour" in Kenya. Buoyed by impending independence, a "major portion of Indian skilled labour" returned to their homeland and an "appreciable number…migrated to the adjoining territories."[21]

Those South Asians that remained seemed as hostile to colonialism as Africans, which was equally unsettling for the settlers. Chanan Singh was infuriated that a

greater part of the fertile, well-watered land in Kenya was reserved for exclusive occupation by the Europeans—the "only land that can grow lucrative crops like coffee, tea and pyrethrum." European farmers were lavished with liberal loans at cheap rates of interest, while specially reduced rates on the state-owned railway were allocated for produce of European farms, as European grown maize was "guaranteed higher prices than African grown maize."[22]

"All the important posts in the government departments are reserved for Europeans," it was said with rancor. "It matters little the qualifications possessed by him are inferior to those possessed by an Indians" since "Europeans with no qualifications whatever have been placed in very responsible posts" and "wages paid to a European for the same work are much higher than the wages paid to an Indian or an African…" The latter were "invariably refused permission to sail by ships of certain British lines, while steamship lines of continental European lines are open to all races." There was a Persian proverb it was said warningly: "the fool does the same thing as the wise man, but the fool does it too late. The colour bar is the real test of British wisdom"—a test they were failing miserably.[23]

Like Africans, South Asians had been transformed by the war, particularly by the ineffectual performance by the supposedly mighty British. "Numerically, Asians are far superior to all whites in the world," it was said triumphantly. "Intellectually, every Asian is on the same plane as the white man." Yes, "the Africans are anxious to drive the Indians bag and baggage out of East Africa"—but make no mistake: this was due to the influence of the "White Powers." But fortunately, "in the whites' difficulties and weaknesses lie our salvation…"[24]

It was not just the independence of what was once British India but the simultaneous independence of the Muslim state that was Pakistan, which reverberated in East Africa,[25] providing what had been a put-upon minority in both Asia and East Africa a jolt of possible power. Strikingly, the Admadiyya Muslim sect,[26] played a significant role in both Pakistan and the Islamic community that was then emerging in the United States itself.[27]

Just as the United States began to grapple with the manifold costs of segregation, the colony was compelled to do likewise. It was in 1949 in Mombasa that the colonizers began to tally the costs of maintaining four categories of schools: European, Asian, African, and Arab. H.C. Stephens acknowledged that "Mohammedan children have always been neglected in education" and cautioned that "we must avoid teaching our children to become Pakistan[i] and Hindustan[i]," an indication of how the momentous events of August 1947 were roiling the waters across the ocean in Mombasa.[28]

This port city with its substantial South Asian population and militant working-class traditions had long been a thorn in the sacroiliac of the settler regime. This population was also thought to be a vector for the transmission of radical ideology, which became a festering concern after the Cold War's onset. Public Enemy Number 1 in this regard seemed to be Makhan Singh, an important union leader. Even before the guns had sounded in World War II, he was reporting elatedly that the "trade union movement is spreading here like wildfire," pointing with joy to "a strike of African workers" at the "Texas Company."[29] Nearly 6,000 workers took part in strikes as war was erupting in Europe.[30] South

Asians were pivotal when labor surged in the 1930s and were essential during the strike of railway workers in 1914 and the struggle for more wages by African workers in 1921 and their subsequent general strike—not to mention the strike of mostly Indian workers in 1931.[31] Singh's Labour Trade Union of East Africa was not large, comprising 3,000 members, according to one source, but in a colony where militant organization was at a premium, this was hard to downplay.[32]

Though U.S. representatives were obsessed with detecting the faintest hint of radicalism, they were not as concerned about the twin epidemics of forced labor and child labor that beset the colony—boys and girls as young as twelve routinely held jobs.[33] The "compulsory labor" that existed in Kenya, said Britain's Trade Unions Congress (TUC), was a contagion that influenced similar trends in the Rhodesias and Nigeria.[34]

Nor did this hyperactive Consulate evince any concern when the authorities sought to deport Singh in the wake of a wave of postwar labor activism, a maneuver that one of his comrades asserted was greeted with "great agitation in East Africa, India, England and South Africa," suggestive of what the colonizers were up against.[35] Born in India in 1913, his father migrated to Kenya in 1920 and he followed in 1927. One of the founders of the workers' movement in Kenya, in December 1938 he went to India for what was thought to be a short holiday but the colonial government there arrested him in Ahamedabad.[36] While in India he worked alongside the influential Communist Party of India, serving as an editor of the official organ of their important Punjab Committee from 1943 to 1947.[37] Finally with independence he was able to return to Kenya but the authorities there hardly embraced him given their hysteria about Communists and unions.[38] Undaunted, Singh hailed the "general strike of 1950" and similar unrest that beset Mombasa particularly.[39]

Many settlers and their U.S. allies suspected that the most formidable opposition to the status quo came from South Asians supported by newly independent India, whose early foreign policy was explicitly anticolonial and was thought to be influencing South Asians in Kenya.[40]

Yet—arguably—an embrace of the kind of class-based organization that Singh represented might have served to blunt the coming thrust of Kikuyu nationalism that exploded in the "Mau Mau" revolt but the tumult induced by the strike in Mombasa in 1947 helped to forestall this outcome and, certainly, it would have been counterintuitive for Washington to push its ally in a direction it was blocking at home. For there was no audible support from Washington when Paul Robeson, quite close to the Communist Party, began to turn his considerable talents against British colonialism in Africa—which did not thrill London.[41] Robeson had resided intermittently in London and was a frequent visitor thereafter, where he raised substantial amounts of funds for British Communists,[42] a chief domestic opponent of colonialism. The authorities unleashed secret surveillance of him when he began touring Britain—he was in contact with students it was reported. Nairobi's representative in London said he would be "grateful" for information about his activity concerning East Africa.[43]

Somehow the colonial authorities received a copy of a letter from Robeson's comrade—and former leader of the seamen's union in the United

States—Ferdinand Smith when he called a rally in Harlem that he wished Kenyatta to address or alternatively forward a message.[44] Earlier both London and Nairobi were concerned after Kenyatta considered travel to the United States where they might not be able to track his activities as carefully but, as well, he could draw upon the relatively considerable resources of African Americans.[45]

The authorities also feared that the labor unrest that was wracking Mombasa was not only being inspired by India but also the ubiquitous foe of colonialism and white supremacy: U.S. Negroes.[46] Sir Percy Sillitoe, considered a master of intelligence gathering, confided that "we possess a considerable amount of information on Kenyatta, which gives evidence of a long record of Communist activities, chiefly from the Negro angle," where Robeson too was thought to be prominent.[47] Here the anticommunist interests of London, Nairobi, and Washington all converged—with the latter submerging its concern about where the rigidity of settler white supremacy was leading the colony. This trend was assisted by the outbreak of war in Korea in June 1950 when concern about the intertwined fates of white supremacy and Communists accelerated.[48]

Nairobi also was paying rapt attention to Robeson's Council on African Affairs.[49] One of their reports was denounced by a Nairobi bureaucrat as being "so factually incorrect to be dangerously misleading…" He was so upset that he discussed the matter with the U.S. consul. Quite helpfully, the U.S. diplomat was "prepared to forward my reply to the State Department…so that they may bring the necessary pressure to bear…"[50] But Nairobi's dilemma was revealed when another bureaucrat proved "reluctant to supply figures" on land seizures to bolster their claim for fear of "publication in the American press"—and substantiating CAA's claims.[51]

Unfortunately, this crackdown on the CAA—which was to lead to its dissolution about five years later—was joined by London's trade union movement. After one British union leader heard about the banning of CAA periodicals in Kenya, there was no murmur of protest.[52] Instead, H.V. Tewson castigated the publications in question as exemplars of "extreme Communist anti-colonial propaganda…"[53] Shortly thereafter, W. Alphaeus Hunton, the CAA's then leader, issued the "strongest protest" when Madison Square Garden in Manhattan, barred their "concert meeting" on the transparently spurious "grounds of alleged possible bearing of anti-subversive measures not yet enacted into law."[54] When Hunton reached out to the NAACP—which only recently had defrocked its elderly founder, Du Bois, on similar anticommunist grounds—their leader, Roy Wilkins, demurred since the proposed meeting was allegedly "in conjunction with a permit granted to the Communist Party."[55] A flabbergasted Hunton termed this a "false conception"[56]—still, the CAA remained on the fast track to oblivion, while the NAACP began to retreat from engagement with Africa.

This concern about Communists was to overwhelm any iota of apprehension harbored by Washington about the potency of the settler regime; this concern was evident even during the time during the war when Moscow and Washington were presumed allies. At a time when Josef Stalin himself was being deified on magazine covers in Manhattan and lauded in Hollywood movies, Washington was being informed anxiously that a "group of Mombasa residents have formed a

'Russian Circle' for the purpose of studying the Russian language and informing themselves on matters connected with the Soviet Union…" There were fifty of these intrepid souls and, strikingly, they had "arranged to obtain from 'Friends of the Soviet Union' in Johannesburg" a slew of "Russian films."[57] As it monitored this trend, Washington became quite uneasy about "the trend of recent lectures-all delivered by British subjects—[which were] definitely socialistic…"[58] London knew that Washington's support for the preservation of its Empire might emerge from their mutual uneasiness about Moscow.[59]

Washington's fretfulness about Communists' influence overwhelmed any residual concern about white supremacy in the postwar era—and in Singh, Kenyatta, Du Bois and Robeson they had plenty of rich targets on which to focus. Dean Acheson, who was present at the creation of this trend in U.S. foreign policy, in early 1947 alerted his nation's diplomats about an alleged danger provided by Moscow's interest in subverting colonialism.[60] Their antennae properly attuned, Washington's delegates in the region sensed a Communist thrust in every burst of anticolonial militancy. The "Somali Youth League," which was active in Mombasa, was said to have "Communist overtones…"[61] Mauritius, which was monitored from Mombasa, witnessed "Communist stirrings" which "fills the Consulate with no little concern," as a "Soviet threat" was perceived.[62]

Not to be outdone, U.S. delegates in Nairobi responded with gusto. There was fear that "with the offer of scholarships to natives of British East Africa to study in the United States," this Red contamination could spread.[63] Closer to home, the Uganda disturbances of mid-1949, were said to be marked by "Communist influence," that had to be taken seriously.[64]

Even in Nairobi in 1949, Washington was concerned about an alleged threat from Communists—a hazard that emerged from odd places, for example, the otherwise staid pages of the *Daily Chronicle*, which was accused of the ultimate sin: opting to "take the Communist Party line" and not "persuaded to place any USIS [U.S. Information Service] material," that is, propaganda, in their pages.[65] Consular officials worried incessantly that the region was a "fertile field should Communists begin concerted action" but were not moved to advocate measures—for example, demolishing racist laws—that might forestall their perceived nightmare.[66]

Also taken seriously was the postwar inclination of Africans to seek higher education abroad, particularly in the United States. But, it was felt, that the predominantly Negro colleges inclined to grant them admission might not be hospitable to the pro-colonial ideology thought to be necessary in the face of challenge by Communists—or so thought the colonizer. The settler regime was driven to distraction by the perceived Red threat but that was not all. They also had to worry about whether Washington was becoming wobbly on the critical matter of white supremacy, which it was thought could erode anticommunism and the Empire itself. Washington was embarrassed—instead of unapologetic—when the Ethiopian Ambassador was escorted out of Constitution Hall, as he was thought to be a mere Negro interloper rather than a representative of a sovereign state.[67]

Instead of presenting a solid phalanx of whiteness, Washington seemed to be more than willing to steal a march on the Empire by not turning a blind eye to

racist transgressions, even though London–Addis Ababa relations were deteriorating, particularly given the latter's seeming eagerness to condemn challenges to colonial rule in the region. Ethiopia had been reduced to a mere dependency of the Empire in the wake of Italy's ouster, which left a residue of bitterness even after this situation changed.[68]

Mutually troubled by Moscow, the settlers, London and Washington could all bond on this basis, which cushioned the blow inflicted by the challenge from the United States to the Empire. Still, the settlers understandably might have felt that Washington—given their embarrassment instead of pride at how the Ethiopian Ambassador was treated—would retreat from the more egregious aspects of Jim Crow, which could leave Nairobi isolated. It was in that context that Nairobi began looking southward to Pretoria, whose recent proclamation of apartheid—which made Jim Crow seem mild by comparison—suggested they would find kindred spirits in Kenya. The white settlers in Nairobi "looked to South Africa today for moral support," said the British representative in Pretoria in 1950: "this was not a recent development…"[69] No, it was not. Nairobi's notion of an East African Federation was seen as a twin of the apartheid policies of the infamous Hitlerite, D.F. Malan.[70] London, no slouch in the rarified realm of racist policy, still had to acknowledge that "a fellow-feeling existed between the white settlers in the African territories from which Britain was excluded…"[71]

In this less than enlightened company, Washington could come across as a racial radical—or naif—to the point where it could be perceived as opening the door to Communist subversion. Hence, unsurprisingly, during this era of heightened hysteria, the Colonial Office was informed that resolute defenders of settler colonialism were increasingly concerned about African students in the United States. The United States seemed to present the worst of all worlds to the colonizer since these students also were "exposed too to segregation in its acutest and most humiliating form in the South"[72]—which could inflame them as they contemplated their homelands.

By 1950 this concern had begun to focus intently on the activities of the leading African American anthropologist, St. Clair Drake, then teaching at Chicago's Roosevelt University, who had attended what is now Hampton University—whose earliest students were formerly enslaved or the descendants thereof—in the 1920s with the son of Chief Koinange. Drake, who was born in 1911 in the United States, had a father who hailed from Barbados[73]: it was in Virginia, where his son attended university, that Drake's father became a stalwart of a movement influenced by Marcus Garvey.[74]

It was in 1926 after a chance meeting with Earl Cromsack, a U.S. national on sabbatical in Africa that Chief Koinange was able to arrange to send his first-born son, Peter Mbiyu, to Hampton. It was a difficult adjustment for him, especially because of the harsh winters. In the middle of his first semester he contracted a serious case of tuberculosis and was admitted into the State Sanatorium for Negroes at Burkeville, Virginia where he would remain for almost a year, receiving a further immersion in Jim Crow. Subsequently, he returned to Hampton, where he established a solid "B" average and became a celebrity of sorts as a star on the school's soccer team. He left a

deep impression on this coastal school: to this day a Koinange Collection is a prime asset of the Hampton University Museum.[75]

It was in Virginia that he became acquainted with Drake, experienced the tumult of a student strike in 1927 and joined the Alpha Phi Alpha fraternity. "We both cultivated the myth of our close friendship," said Drake years later: "we were friends," he conceded "but not close," though these words can be discounted as they were written when the African American was disappointed with the African's evolution. In fact, Koinange—who could well be regarded as on Kenyatta's level as a Founding Father—was influenced by Drake in a way akin to the way Kenyatta was influenced by Robeson. Thus, the Kenyan student conferred with Drake when his father provided testimony on the machinations that led to his people losing their land to European settlers. Drake conceded that this relationship "awakened my interest in how settler colonies operation in Africa" and "fixed Kenya in my mind," so that "Kenya became one of my concerns for the next fifty years." If "Mau Mau hadn't made it an impossibility, I would have gone to Kenya instead of Liberia and Ghana in 1954 for my first African experience," he said.[76]

"If he was to win the respect of settlers and civil servants back home," said Drake, Koinange would need a British degree—the one from Hampton being discounted since it was from the United States and was a predominantly Negro college besides. So Koinange moved to London where he became part of a circle that included Bunche and his fellow Negro scholar, Lorenzo Turner—both became his friends.[77]

Naturally he came under surveillance by the British. The Church Missionary Society proved helpful here,[78] as did a leading paleontologist. "Dr. [Louis] Leakey called," said one Empire agent in the Summer of 1936. "He says that young Koinange has been in the United States" for "the last seven years" and he "suggested to Dr. Leakey that it will be a good thing for him to get de-Americanized by putting time at an English university…"[79] "I rather fear he'll have been spoiled by the USA," confided another agent sourly.[80] Leakey was blunt about this, asserting that "in view of the fact that Kenya is British & not an American colony I cannot help but feeling that is very desirable that [Koinange] should obtain some measure of English background in his studies & outlook,"[81] suggesting the skepticism of the erstwhile ally in Washington, as well as revealing the significance of the existence of Negro colleges which spurred the colonizer to improve their otherwise poor record in education. Leakey arrived at this conclusion after discussing with Koinange his U.S. studies, including his M.A. from Columbia University in 1936.[82] Koinange was not beyond hope in their opinion—he was "not at all aggressive" said one British official, "as so many educated Africans are," so he was admitted to a British university so that he could "de-Americanize himself…"[83]

Though he was allegedly steeped in "Americanization," Washington still felt it wise to keep a close eye on him. He met with U.S. officials in Madras in 1949 but they were unimpressed, not dissenting from the branding of him with the definitive label—he was "definitely very anti-European in his feelings and nationalistic to a degree," it was reported.[84] "Anti-European feeling is steadily increasing,"

it was said of Nairobi, "and men like Koinange are doing everything they can to foster it. Being a very well-educated man," having attended Hampton, Ohio Wesleyan University, Columbia, and the London School of Economics, among other institutions they had monitored, they expected more of him, though London might well have pointed out that education could lead to a deepening hatred of colonialism rather than accommodation to it. This was no minor matter, said the Washington agent that was trailing him since "most Europeans in these territories" were "unaware of the dangerous position which currently exists," a situation that was "potentially much more dangerous than [that] in South Africa…"[85]

Actually, Washington was not sure what to make of Koinange. Though he may have been shaky—from their viewpoint—on matters racial, unlike Kenyatta he did not seem to possess blatant ties to Communists. There were those in London who were sure that Kenyatta had joined the Communist Party of Great Britain as early as 1929, then attended the Lenin School in Moscow in 1933,[86] whereas this did not seem to be Koinange's orientation. On returning to Nairobi, Washington was pleased to see that Kenyatta was apparently "adopting a very moderate and reasonable tone" but Redness could not be easily bleached. He was "getting to be an old man by African standards (about 49 years old)" it was reported in a veiled reference to the abysmal life expectancy of indigenes, a subject that rarely preoccupied U.S. agents, and his "power is on the wane…" As for Koinange, he was a "man more likely to be viewed with alarm by the local authorities…"[87]

It was Koinange's connection to St. Clair Drake that seemed to bring both added scrutiny by authorities on both sides of the Atlantic. The two had shared an apartment in London in 1947–1948, where Koinange served as a representative of what became the eventual ruling party in Kenya, the Kenya African National Union, led by Kenyatta.[88] R. Mugo Gatheru, who had a scholarship waiting at Drake's Roosevelt University[89] before deciding to attend Lincoln University in Pennsylvania, where Nkrumah had attended previously, was a fruit of this relationship.

Drake had a personal stake in this student's fate. "I am convinced he will be the Nkrumah of Kenya," he insisted, "if we can help him get educated. He's got the stuff! I've let him have spending change from time to time, but am strapped at the moment," he told the more affluent Earl Dickerson, a prosperous and progressive Negro lawyer and businessman.[90] Because of Koinange, Drake developed a "deep concern for the peoples of Kenya. I chose East Africa as a field of study because of friendship with a Kenyan classmate" and became "African student adviser at Roosevelt…" It "was out of our schools that the great West African leaders came" and he wanted to replicate this for East Africa and since "Kenya is almost as bad as South Africa," this nation should be the focus.[91] Drake stressed that "only *one* Kenya African got a chance to study in this country between 1927 and 1945," whereas by 1951 there were "six—out of 5,000,000 people" and he wanted to see more.[92] In addition, Drake had made plans for Koinange to come to the United States to teach at Roosevelt: "his passage was purchased; his passport was in order, but the American Consul in London absolutely refused to grant him a visa." Drake thought he knew who the real culprit was: "I am convinced," he insisted, "that the Colonial Office under pressure from the Kenya settlers had

our State Department to block him." Drake also had reason to believe that "his association with me had something to do with the matter, as I was associated while in England with the United Somali Party that was fighting the return of Somaliland to Italy…"

Though under siege himself, Drake had no time to lend a hand to others similarly situated. "Under no conditions accept any aid from our Council on African Affairs, of which Paul Robeson is Chairman and Dr. Du Bois is Vice-President," he told Gatheru. "It is believed here that they are trying to make Africa an ally of the Soviet Union in the coming war," he asserted and "over here even those of us who have been friends of Paul Robeson's for years, feel the pressure not even to speak to him when he comes to town…" So, "stay away from the Council on African Affairs," he repeated. "If you have any of their literature, throw it away before you sail," since "it is well known that Kenya is an important strategic base in the coming war…"[93]

But steering clear of Robeson did not aid Gatheru who finally made it to Lincoln University. Weeks before the State of Emergency, a U.S. Department of Justice agent traveled to eastern Pennsylvania to interrogate this Kikuyu intellectual for a sweat-inducing four hours. What do you know about Kenyatta, he was asked? What about Koinange? They also wanted to know what Negroes had aided him—though they had a creeping suspicion. It was true that in Kenya he had been on the staff of the nationalist journal, the *African Voice*, and—as Drake put it—"had access to exchange copies of the *Chicago Defender* and the *Pittsburgh Courier*." He sought higher education in the United States which is how he made it to Lincoln—but that was the problem: for Nkrumah's alma mater was seen as the "fountainhead of what is known in Africa as 'Gold Coastism'. It is usually Gold Coastism, that African white settlers mean when they accuse someone of communism," said Drake, who was to flee in the face of a similar accusation. "Gold Coastism in Kenya would mean that 5,000,000 Africans would vote where none vote right now," said the African American who "spent many hours talking" with the besieged African.[94]

The Nairobi authorities did not view Gatheru as benignly as Drake did. Gatheru, said colonial intelligence, "contributed a somewhat abusive letter headed 'white settlers in Kenya'" while he was serving as a "learner in the Medical Research Laboratory" in Nairobi. In March 1948, their dossier reported, he contacted Marcus Garvey's organization and stated he was working for the Kenya African Union; therein he requested "political details and data [on] the United States, especially for details regarding the relationship between whites and non-whites in New York…" Well, they concluded, "if not a Communist," he was "strongly communistically inclined" and "one of the most potentially dangerous Africans in the colony and should he go to America it would be to study politics and to make political contacts" hostile to Nairobi and Washington alike.[95]

Washington. had developed a special kinship to Nairobi over the years, identifying with its struggle to subdue indigenes and its attempt to implant white supremacy. As a beaten-down London began its slow but steady retreat from Empire, it was only logical that Washington would seek to fill the vacuum. Though various U.S. diplomats in Mombasa and Nairobi had expressed reservations

about the viability of white supremacy and colonialism, these concerns were swept aside by the greater concerns about the influence of Communists. This was the case when the authorities sought to marginalize Singh, even though this may have set the stage for the accelerated rise of Kikuyu nationalism. Even a decent intellectual such as Drake was swept up in the hysteria, which underscored its reach and depth. Yet Washington knew about the deteriorating situation in Kenya that was leading to an insurrection. The secretary of state was informed in "confidential" terms in the Summer of 1949 that "the situation in the African reserves is very grave owing to the failure of rains. Lack of food and imminent starvation will drive the African to rebellion," warned a U.S. agent. "The Government is expecting serious trouble in the shape of riots," he concluded morosely, "while the majority of Europeans and Indians are oblivious to danger…"[96] Yet when the State of Emergency was declared and lurid stories about "Mau Mau" began to circulate, Washington became gripped with another fear: that inspired Negroes would emulate their African cousins and take to the warpath.

8

State of Emergency

When Hollywood met Mau Mau the result was not pretty.

It was shortly after the proclamation of the State of Emergency in the Fall of 1952 when even the dimmest had come to recognize that the colony—and its relatively small European ruling minority—was on the verge of being overrun by a full-scale uprising of the discontented. At the same time the United States had begun halting steps toward confronting its own racist reality, which was deemed to be necessary lest Moscow gain a propaganda advantage. Thus, when some in Washington eyeballed Kenya they thought they had perceived a presentiment of what might befall themselves—which was more than unnerving. Subsequently, said Kenyan American, President Barack Obama, the Kenya conflict conveyed "an image that played on all the fears of the colonial West, the same sort of fear that Nat Turner had once evoked in the antebellum South…"[1]

It was in that inflamed context that Metro-Goldwyn-Mayer dispatched some of the nation's brightest stars—Clark Gable, Ava Gardner, Grace Kelly—to the wilds of East Africa to film the somewhat less than engaging *Mogambo*, a conventional love triangle. Rather quickly, the studio came to discover that a number of their truck drivers were simultaneously engaged in logistics for the Kikuyu-based resistance. Euro-American executives were stunned when a surprise raid on a MGM convoy left several of the heavy trucks sitting helplessly, driverless, by the side of the road.[2]

Making a large-scale Technicolor blockbuster in East Africa required an enormous operation, a gathering of nearly 600 including cast and crew, drivers, porters, pilots, guards, guides, hunters, chefs, servants, nurses, and those whom resistance fighters liked to penetrate—"tribal extras." Hollywood's finest were agitated when word reached them as they were filming that "angry natives," that is, "Mau Mau bandits"—as one of tinseltown's scribes put it—were "slaughtering the whites on a nearby farm…" When filming concluded in January 1953, it was not clear whether this had been driven by a previously agreed upon schedule—or anxiety about being swept up in a murderous plot not of their own making.[3]

This was only one aspect of a shambolic production that helped to bring the perils of Africa to an audience that often hardly contemplated the continent whose enslaved denizens had helped to build the advanced nation of which

many were so proud. Clark Gable, the aging matinee idol straining to play a great hunter—though women were his usual prey—could not help but notice that the "main topic of conversation was the Mau Mau infiltration." Eyeing the local quarry, he could not help but notice that European "women carry pistols in their pocketbooks," adding apprehensively, "the white residents can't trust their servants these days."[4] Gable, who like too many visiting Euro-Americans, viewed Kenya as a site to release any lingering sexual inhibitions, "accepted female adulation in general with equanimity," according to one informed settler. Grace Kelly, he recalled "bewitched us all, noticeably Gable," a movie hero with a "curiously strangulated voice, lacking percussion." Ava Gardner, a "perfection of beauty," preferred nude swimming, recalled Terence Gavagham, though she "besmirched her loveliness with her foul language."[5]

The threat of a Mau Mau attack added to the Walter Mitty-ness of the whole adventure, as Gable and others ambled around the movie set like popinjays with chests puffed out—and stomachs held in—while in their midst revolt was brewing.[6]

MGM, proud of its galaxy of stars, sought to accommodate the authorities, including their strict rules of segregation, featuring the separateness of "Europeans," "Asians," and, least of all: "Africans."[7] It was the latter that the authorities seemed most worried about, feeling that the Kikuyu-based resistance could turn the typical turmoil and busyness of a movie set to their advantage—an attack on a movie set, then as now, was virtually guaranteed to capture global headlines and bring attention to the just cause of the colonized. Thus, the district commissioner in Isiolo was meticulous in seeking to "confirm" with MGM who was "in your employ so that we may both be satisfied that unauthorized camp followers do not obtain unlawful admission onto your location and into my district…" He was grievously concerned with monitoring "Kikuyu employees…"[8] "I did check on all African arrived by this morning's convoy," said Eva Monley of MGM, "and we discovered two or more who were not on the list given you," including a "Goan cook"; she was "sorry to cause" these officials "so much inconvenience and extra work" but the arrival of a huge team from Hollywood simply created too many opportunities for "infiltration."[9]

"I enclose a list of Europeans, plus details of a certain number of Africans whom we would like to bring into your district," said Stan Goldsmith of MGM. Sensitive to current events, he acknowledged the authorities' desire that "no Kikuyus be allowed into your district. We would be grateful to have this clarified," he said, "as we have a number of drivers and actors, in particular who are Kikuyus and who have been in our employ for some time. To dispense with their services at short notice and obtain replacements will cause us a great deal of inconvenience," he pleaded.[10] By their own records, MGM drivers—who operated Dodges and Studebakers—included six Kikuyus, one Ethiopian, one Somali, one "Meru," one "Mkambi," and one "Amara."[11] Naturally, the higher paid members of this U.S. crew were all of European descent—including Danes, Italians, and British.[12]

The staff from Hollywood provided a security headache for their Nairobi counterparts. The production manager insisted on locating one of the larger sets

on the Uaso Nyiro River, oblivious to the rich possibilities for ingress and egress this could provide to regime opponents. Impervious, he added, "we are looking for a river shore upon which we can beach our long, 40 men canoes and build besides this shoreline a large native village." Undisturbed, he proceeded to add, "we shall need about 1[,]000 natives in this village and Mr. John Ford, the Director, has preferred the Samburu tribe," though, of course, he could not tell a Kikuyu from a Luo from a Zulu. Bowing to prevailing segregationist norms, he suggested that the "Commissioner's hut" be built by "Sikh carpenters," and "supervised by European construction foremen and to have the natives build native huts…"[13]

Expertly drawn sets—constructed by segregated labor or not—could not save a tepid plot with a hackneyed story line, which was *Mogambo's* chief problem (though Gable's lusting after the flaxen-haired Kelly rather than Gardner with her ebony tresses, seemed to mimic the white supremacy that marked the colony). Africans as background props in a story featuring their presumed betters seemed to capture Hollywood's imagination, however, and became a staple for the industry—like a crazed monster in a hockey mask. Nairobi strained to accommodate this production company that arrived from the land of a leading ally but even their patience had limits. "This is hideous isn't it," spluttered one colonizer. "I do hope that you have already discovered that Metro are going to be far more of a menace than Tarzan could ever hope to be," referring to a Hollywood series that pioneered in the defaming of Africans. MGM was a "large and unthoughtful [*sic*] organization," it was said.[14]

MGM in all its Hollywood majesty had arrived in East Africa at a propitious moment when this continent was starting to reclaim headlines as a Cold War battlefield and as African Americans began surging toward a form[15] of equality: these events were connected for these struggling and persecuted U.S. nationals were often pointed to by Moscow and their allies as being of a piece, indicative of how the North Atlantic powers viewed the darkest of them all.

Yet this linkage provided something of an obstacle for Black America given the lurid manner in which what was termed "Mau Mau" was treated. It was a "secret society terrorizing thousands of natives and threatening to drive all whites from Kenya," the august *New York Times* told its readers even before the State of Emergency. The presumed leader, Jomo Kenyatta, "studied Marxism in Moscow," it was reported and "may or may not be a Communist"[16]—though at that time, this tenuous association was sufficient to bring an indictment. The "organization does seem to bear some resemblance to the cells of a Communist organization," it was added suspiciously; that Kenyatta "married a white English woman" and had "visited Moscow," were facts that seemed connected and of relevance.[17]

At times it seemed this newspaper of record was seeking to reassure itself, as much as its readers, asserting that "no Red influence" was "seen" in the resistance, though it had to resort to raw stereotypes to propel this charge: the "frustrations of a savage people neither mentally nor economically able to adjust itself to the swift pace of civilization" was the problem. The "existence of Mau Mau has been known for some time. In 1940 it was proscribed for subversive activity,"[18] it added inaccurately.

U.S. diplomats and journalists often seemed to be singing from the same work of choral hymns, as both seemed highly skeptical of the intentions of the South Asian population, a tendency that co-existed with the portrayals of alleged African primitivism. T.W. Tyrell, President of the Tanganyika European Council was quoted prominently in the *Times* as averring that "New Delhi wants to turn all East Africa into what will amount to an Indian colony,"—one of the few occasions that the notion of colonialism was questioned in these pages: this was a "new fangled form of 'Oriental imperialism'." This population was accused of "communistic leanings," while—it was added respectfully—the "small white population feels itself being crowded by the Indians," for the sympathetic European "has invested courage, years, money and energy in hacking a civilization out of the African hinterland" and was justifiably "worried about the Eastern threat to his achievement."[19] Worse, "Mau Mau leaders had been spreading rumors among the Kikuyu tribesmen that India was about to 'invade' East Africa to 'free the oppressed Africans from the white yoke.' Other rumors said that Russia was in daily touch with Mau Mau leaders and that Egypt—'the Mau Mau of the North'—would join hands with Kenya Africans once it had 'liberated' the Suez Canal from the British."[20]

It was hard for these visiting Euro-American writers not to identify with the settler minority—they often drew analogies between the routing of indigenes in North America and what was occurring in East Africa. This included the popular writer, Negley Farson. He "veered" toward "crude insensitivity" toward Africans, according to his minder, though it was unclear if the "ghastly ulcer cavity in his knee" and his tendency to "drink and eat intemperately" may have shaped his mood.[21] Though the overwhelming majority could not vote, Farson in the early 1950s compared the Kenya legislature favorably to "any European parliament," as being "such a fair one." Yes, concluded Farson hopefully, "there are overwhelming reasons—make no mistake about it!—why Kenya will always remain a White Man's Country. This fits in perfectly," he added, "with the United States' increasing interest in the security of the Near and Middle East, particularly in Greece, Turkey and Iran."[22]

Farson's capacious vision of the colony's importance was evocative of the far-reaching ripples sent forth by the resistance in Kenya. In faraway Trinidad, a major source of petroleum for the Empire and throughout the colonies in the Caribbean, Kenya—in the words of the Colonial Office—"attracted a good deal of attention."[23] The fascist minded D.F. Malan of apartheid South Africa thought he was tarnishing his domestic resistance when, it was reported, he "likened the series of native riots against racial segregation laws to the Mau Mau terrorist disorders" since "both movements were directed from the outside against the white man…"[24] Perhaps not accidentally, it was just after the proclamation of apartheid in 1948 that the Nairobi authorities were elated to note that South Africa and the United States chose to "raise [their] missions to Embassy level."[25] In neighboring Namibia, occupied by Pretoria, unrest was said to be inspired by events in Kenya.[26] In Salisbury, Rhodesia, there were complaints about BBC coverage since the "implication seemed to be that the Mau Mau were operating in South Africa," which was "rather careless…"[27]

Meanwhile in London the Tories had returned to power which provided a jolt of optimism for those who held white supremacy dear and Winston Churchill, who knew Kenya well, was back in charge. Yet when a visiting Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) emissary visited him in the early afternoon at 10 Downing Street during the height of the unrest, he was reported to be "in bad shape," with "speech slurred" and "his vision occluded, his memory fleeting."[28] Unfortunately, the prime minister's alcohol induced haze was a metaphor for the short-sighted support of colonialism provided by his North Atlantic partner in Washington.

Kenya had long been a central node in what well may have been termed a Racist International that stretched southward to the Rhodesias, apartheid South Africa, and Namibia, along with the Portuguese colonies of Angola and Mozambique, ably supported by Lisbon, London, and Washington. Fraternal, symbolic and meaningful visits to Nairobi from its allies were a frequent occurrence, so what occurred in Kenya was bound to be taken seriously in what could well be denoted as the "[w]hite Atlantic."[29]

Yet a Cold War was going on and Kenyatta was tied to Robeson—and, reputedly, Moscow—so what was an Empire to do? More to the point, what was Washington to do? The stakes were high and the payoff seemed to be increasing. In the pivotal year of 1953 there was bright optimism about the attempt by a "leading [U.S.] oil company," as the *London Times* put it, to "carry out a survey in Northern Kenya with a view to taking up development licenses there." Major players including Eugene Black, "president of the International Bank" and David Rockefeller were slotted for visits, while "two big American concerns" pledged to "establish factories in Kenya. They are a motor company, planning for the assembly and part manufacturing of vehicles at Mombasa and a clothing manufacturing firm."[30] Ever helpful Washington was pitching in by providing loans to develop the crucial Mombasa port.[31] Then the influential William Moran, head of the "African section of the U.S. Foreign Operations Administration" arrived in Nairobi for a lengthy stay on a purely exploratory journey.[32] This was not a small matter.[33]

So Kenyatta was put on trial, accused of being the alleged evil genius behind Mau Mau. Visiting him in Kenya earlier, Negley Farson was decidedly underwhelmed. He was a "big, paunchy man, bearded with slightly bloodshot eyes, a theatrically monstrous ebony elephant-headed walking stick, a gold-rimmed carnelian signet ring about the size of a napkin-ring, an outsize gold wrist-watch fastened to his hefty arm with a gold strap, dressed in European tweed jacket and flannel slacks—with as pleasant, ingratiating and wary a manner as you ever met." He was residing in a "pleasant thatched house, built in the European style, with two symbolic spears and a shield." Then there were books, "so many books that you wonder, as you often do in a European library, if he has ever tried to read the half of them." Then there were the photographs—of Roland Hayes, Claude McKay, and, of course, the enemy du jour: Paul Robeson.

The beefy Kenyatta was contrasted unfavorably to Chief Waruhiu of the Kikuyus, whose murder in broad daylight, allegedly by supporters of the resistance, helped to bring on the State of Emergency. Instead of Robeson, the chief asked about Booker T. Washington, as he smiled gracefully and spoke warmly of his autobiography. He was equally taken with the "impressive number of brilliant

Negroes who are now appearing in all walks of American life." Farson comforted his readers by telling them that "as it is now, the race relations in Nairobi are less uncomfortable than they are in Washington, D.C." Yes, he avowed, "the Africans have more things to be thankful for than they know"—which was truer than he realized.[34]

Farson was not unique in his sympathies, he was merely expressing mainstream Euro-American opinion of that era. According to the *Times*, the unfortunate "whites," it was noted in the Spring of 1953, "who have been living for many months in an atmosphere of horror and tension certainly without parallel anywhere in the world" merited concern. "One can understand and sympathize with the bitterness and anger of these settlers," it was said almost tearfully. As for the "Kikuyu who takes the Mau Mau oath," he was "surely lost, so far as his free will is concerned, as the zombies of Haitian voodooism."[35] One alleged expert on Kenya was cited for the proposition that the resistance was "openly anti-white and anti-Christian," which combined with their supposed pro-Red sympathies meant they were the object of intensely felt hatred among many in the United States.[36]

Thus, the heralded chief—of whom Farson spoke so warmly—was killed, then Kenyatta, who the eminent U.S. writer despised, was placed on trial.[37] By April 1953, what the *Times* called a "Soviet Trained Mau Mau Terrorist" was "sentenced to 7 Years' Hard Labor." He was a "close friend of Paul Robeson," and "lived in a place furnished by the Communist International."[38] His lawyer, D. N. Pritt, the bespectacled sixty-six-year-old litigator served as "Chairman of the British Society for Cultural Relations with Russia."[39]

Soon once stalwart supporters of anticolonialism in Kenya were fleeing in all directions. Just before Kenyatta's conviction, the man he once instructed in Swahili, Ralph Bunche, was brought before the U.S. Congress to engage in a ritual disavowal of his once warm ties to Robeson and the left. It was the early evening in Manhattan, where the hearing was held, and Bunche was grilled for over an hour, puffing cigarettes during the interrogation, leaving the impression of acute nervousness. He denounced Robeson's comrade, W. Alphaeus Hunton, with whom he once worked alongside at Howard University. "We had a Teachers' Union," recalled Bunche but "Alphaeus moved in on it, in fact, broke it up" and in what was seen as typical Communist style, "…tried to divert it from the true purpose of the union…" Bunche then attacked Communist leader, James Ford, who had pioneered in bringing Ethiopia's cause in the 1930s to a wider audience, and distanced himself from the now reviled Alger Hiss who, said Bunche, "was never my immediate superior" during their tenure at the State Department. Bunche spoke proudly of his time in the "secret branch" of the CIA's predecessor, the Office of Strategic Services, for whom he toiled in Africa. He repudiated the Communist Party. As for Robeson, he was a "tragedy," though not "an ideological Communist" but a "racial Communist"—whatever that meant: though it was hardly reassuring in the context of events in Kenya.[40]

Preceding him in appearing before Congress was Max Yergan, once a leading spokesman for the Council. Almost half a decade had passed since he had fled from his previous political engagements. Unlike Bunche, then operating at the

highest levels of the U.N., Yergan was not so prestigiously employed. "A friend of mind, an American businessman," who had "business interests in Africa" had "helped" him "finance" his journey to Africa in 1952. He expressed concern about Moscow's "beachhead" on the continent. "I think the situation in South Africa and in East Africa," he warned, "is charged with dynamite, and can explode at almost any time…" With solemnity he added, "it is possible for us to lose Africa just as [we] have lost parts of Asia…" Yergan sought to link the Red Scare with the Black Scare, asserting boldly, "for some reason which I cannot understand, the British have stated officially that Communists have had nothing to do with the uprising…" The crustily conservative Senator William Jenner who was presiding found little to disagree with in Yergan's peroration, though he had a related agenda: "the more we educate, the more trouble we get into, the better health we give them, the more population. Are we not just chasing our tails?"[41] It was ironic that Yergan became a vehicle through which these messages were transmitted given his past pro-Communist sympathies. Eslanda Robeson was bowled over. It was "more than 10 years ago," she said in 1948, "in the drawing room of our flat in London" that "Max Yergan explained to me his idea of building an organization which would inform Negroes in America (and other peoples everywhere) about the terrible conditions under which the African people live and work…" Promptly, she continued, "I therefore gave him a check for three hundred pounds to help found such an organization, thereby becoming, he said, the first contributing member" of what became the CAA. Later "it was in his home on Hamilton Terrace [in Harlem]," she recalled, "that I first met Earl Browder, this very well-known Communist was the guest of honor there."[42]

Yergan, however, had sensed the way the winds were blowing and sailed adroitly away from his past and toward his controversial congressional testimony. Sure, London said Reds were not behind this conflict but, he stated, "perhaps there is more here than meets the eye" for this eyewitness reminded, "I was in Kenya in September 1952" and knew of what he spoke. There was a Red Wurlitzer at play, as he saw it, with interconnected Communists pumping out chants for their comrades globally to perform.[43] The "Communist Threat in Africa," cried Yergan, was dire. "The main task of furthering Soviet policy in East Africa," he argued, "has fallen to the Indian Communist Party in cooperation with the party in Britain"; moreover, he asserted, "nowhere is the Communist influence more dangerous than among African students abroad…"[44] The former CAA leader's star was ascending, as he was stating what some wanted to hear.[45]

But Robeson was not buying it. "We Colored Americans," he said in the midst of Kenyatta's travails, "will especially want to support our African brothers and sisters in Kenya who are being tried and imprisoned for insisting upon the return of their land…" Vainly he sought to link the intertwined fates of Africans and African Americans—particularly those of the left then under indictment or jailed.[46]

It may not have been coincidental that Bunche and Yergan were hauled before Congress—and Robeson and his comrades were being flagellated—just as the resistance to colonialism in Kenya was gaining traction for these events in Africa captured the imagination in the United States in a way that the continent had not

accomplished in years. It seemed to present a cruel convergence of a Communist inspired uprising designed to shed white blood, somewhat unlikely given that Moscow was in Europe but in an overheated atmosphere rationality had taken a holiday. And if this could happen in East Africa, could it not happen in the Western Hemisphere?

But courage had also taken a hike. The CAA, seemingly the domestic supporter of this nasty nightmare was a major target of abuse. The Council was being deserted by one-time allies and it, in turn, fired back. "The Negro press," it said, "though sympathetic to the cause of African freedom, too often echoes the same British propaganda line," not fully digesting that a "war" was occurring in Kenya and, thus, "people fighting for their lives cannot afford to be merciful to informers, spies and others who collaborate," as the Revolution that established the United States had demonstrated amply. "War is not pretty," it instructed—and "neither is the colonial oppression that breeds war." The Council also "denied that such a thing as the settlers described as Mau Mau existed…"[47] Yet with headlines blaring that what was called Mau Mau "paid their followers cash for killing Europeans," the Negro press, like so many others, was under enormous pressure to conform to prevailing wisdom.[48] It was "like a revolt of the domestic staff," quipped the highly regarded writer, Graham Greene: "Jeeves had sworn, however, unwillingly, to kill Bertie Wooster…" It was much worse than the contemporaneous bloody struggle unfolding in Malaya, which had taxed British forces to the limit.[49]

The talented writer's European compatriots were similarly concerned about the events unfolding in East Africa. The International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU), spurred into existence by the Communist-inspired World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU), sounded the alarm after dispatching a delegation to the region. "At the present time," it was stressed, "Communism presents a potential rather than an actual force in the trade union movements" of Egypt, East Africa and Sudan—though the latter was "the exception," where the railway workers had a radical bent. Honestly, it was conceded, "because of the deplorable wages and conditions, many territories could provide a fertile field for Communist activities. Equally important," it was stated with equal candor, "is the festering field of race relations which prevails in East and Central Africa…" Referring to the influence of Makhan Singh, it was observed that "in Kenya, the East African Trade Union Congress was captured by the Communists in 1949, a Communist-led general strike in 1950 failed and the movement was smashed."[50]

As the State of Emergency was about to be proclaimed, British trade unionists reported that in Kenya "trade union activity has increased very considerably during the course of the past two years," suggesting how resilient the movement was; yet, it was "still the case that only a small fraction of the 400,000 people in paid employment are members of a trade union," while "African membership of trade unions is [in] the region of 27,000"—hardly enough to provide a meaningful challenge to what was called "Mau Mau."[51]

The Cold War, which was portrayed in Manichean terms of good and evil, tended to place restive Africans in the latter category and the settlers in the former. This global conflict also served to sideline militant trade unionism, which

provided an open sesame for the rise of "Mau Mau." Yet, in the United States this was seen through a particular lens—mordant concern about restiveness among the darkest of them all. The colonizer retained the chilling words penned by the popular U.S. writer, Robert Ruark, who declared that the settlers knew that "what is going on in Indo-China, in Morocco and in South Africa is a trend" that was connected inevitably to the "reign of terror inspired to drive the white man out of Kenya. That is [the] declared aim." Kenyatta had strong ties to Moscow, it was said, and, again, his inter-racial marriage was somehow related bizarrely to this antiwhite plot. Ruark asserted luridly, "I have a copy of the letter, in which the Christmas killings [in Kenya] were promised, that describes the Mau Mau as 'the African Communist Unit.'"[52]

The Moscow based news agency, Izvestia did not reassure. Their report citing Robeson as asserting that the Kenya struggle was for "land, life and freedom" was duly retained by the colonizing power,[53] as it gave an indication of the high stakes at play.[54] "Three or four Mau Mau supporters," it was alleged by London, "went to Moscow for year's 'instruction.'"[55] "Red Mau Mau?" it was asked quizzically; "it would not be surprising, indeed, if an Asian were discovered to be the motivating agent behind the disturbances," said one journalist, perhaps with Makhan Singh in mind; it was "unrealistic to reject the hypothesis that Mau Mau is part of the Communist conspiracy against the peace in Africa" and it was unwise to be too "sensitive to Socialist opinion in Britain" about this knotty matter.[56] The Red Scare had the beauty of deflecting attention away from brutal exploitation of Africans as a casus belli and toward the dual bugaboo of Communists and Black Americans—that Robeson notably was thought to represent.

London was alarmed in the Spring of 1953 when developments in Kenya began "receiving constant" attention in the Soviet press. Seeking to sniff out the movement's alleged Red ties, it was added in "confidential" words that "the reference to Jomo Kenyatta and the Kenya African Union are noticeably ungarnished with the epithets and phrases usually applied to persons or groups who enjoy Moscow's direct benediction…"[57] The BBC was similarly distressed when it noticed that its counterpart in Moscow was carrying "items about the mass manifestations against the colonial regime in Kenya," the "merciless exploitation of the people" and "slave labour on their farms."[58]

Just as the civil rights offensive in the United States often was termed to be inspired by Moscow, the same held true for similar events in Kenya.[59] This also preoccupied Washington. The "success of Mau Mau in Kenya works to the benefit of International Communism in creating another focus of unrest in the Western sphere," said a U.S. diplomat. Yes, he confided, "the tone of this dispatch is pessimistic," since "the political situation here is serious and likely to deteriorate, at least in the near future."[60]

Though the State of Emergency accelerated this kind of thinking, it did not originate then but seemed to ascend with the postwar resurgence. A leading cleric worried that "African Christians knew so little about the real issues at stake that it was quite possible without further elucidation they might well vote in favour of Communism."[61] Thus, the Reverend P.C. Bostock argued—in an approach that did not gain many adherents—that "we must not meet Communism merely with

negative condemnation" since "where Communism merely indicates communal ownership and stewardship of possessions, Christianity can be in agreement with it…"[62] The general secretary of his diocese, speaking from Mombasa, was noticeably unmoved.[63]

In response the BBC, whose potent signal had global reach including to the western hemisphere, unleashed radio broadsides "with the Russian propaganda campaign in mind," as one official put it.[64] As this radio octopus saw it, Kenya and the Empire as a whole "fitted with classic aptness into Moscow's picture of imperialism in decay, torn by 'internal contradictions' and rivalries (American expansionism) and resorting to ever desperate measures to escape the inevitable"—which was actually a nice summary of events then unwinding. "The Americans appear as the chief support and deadliest rival simultaneously of their moribund imperialist partner"—which was not far from the mark. London continued this faux Moscow analysis: Britain "like other colonial powers, is shown to be seeking a solution to her post-war economic difficulties in a more ruthless exploitation of the natural and human resources of her colonies, particularly those in Africa." Shrewd "'Point Four' aid" from Washington was "expected to enhance this process," while permitting "U.S. capital gradually to oust that of Britain"—which would be facilitated easily by the already sizeable presence of U.S. nationals in Kenya, most notably.[65]

London's challenge was to fight a war against Africans in Kenya, while not yielding to Washington—it wound up losing on both fronts. A common anticommunism bonded the two North Atlantic powers, however, but the United States had the added liability—or, perhaps, an asset—of undergoing a wrenching domestic retreat from the more egregious aspects of white supremacy, which could make it appear to be much too soft on fighting the Reds in Africa (as far as the settlers were concerned), while providing flexibility in providing concessions to Africans. London too could afford to be flexible in allocating concessions but it was the colonists themselves who were lagging in this critical category. "You should tread carefully on the colour and race question," was the advice given to one BBC journalist before departing for Nairobi,[66] since the settlers were loath to confront this troubling reality.[67] The problem for the settlers, however, was that their allies in London and Washington particularly were under enormous pressure to pull the plug on the Nairobi regime.

The conflict in Kenya was not only buoyed by the ongoing Red Scare with its dual hobgoblins of Moscow and Black America but it was unfolding as the phenomenon known as television was gaining momentum, which could transmit disturbing images directly to living-rooms globally, giving increased impetus to developments in East Africa. This phenomenon also was marked by a related conflict—that between London and Washington,[68] this time concerning whose technology would be used for color television broadcasts.[69]

That London was basically in a quandary over which U.S. corporation it would pay tribute to in order to use their technology—CBS or RCA—was indicative of how the once mighty Empire had receded in favor of Washington.[70] Thus, London knew likewise that opening the doors of the colony to an influx of U.S. journalists seized with anxiety about the Red Scare could only redound to the

Empire's benefit. Thus it was in 1952 that Victoria Corey of KDKA in Pittsburgh, whose powerful radio signal reached into the industrial Midwest, departed for a three-month journey to East Africa to produce thirty-six programs to be broadcast on a series of "50-thousand watt stations" from coast to coast—the colonizer leapt at the opportunity. That she was writing columns for the *Pittsburgh Post-Gazette* and the *Toledo Blade* and was "taking motion picture film for use in public lectures" only enhanced her value as an antidote to Moscow's thrusts.[71] She was "one of America's outstanding women broadcasters," chortled one official, and an "old friend of the BBC" besides, so the BBC was "extending to Miss Corey any help that we could."[72]

This extension of help to journalists to induce positive press reports at times exceeded the bounds of propriety. "On the subject of Mau Mau and Communism," the Colonial Office advised the Foreign Office, "I am now sending…some authoritative notes which could be used by an author to write an article on the subject." This project was "secret" in that it was "necessary that the author chosen should be all right from a security point of view,"[73] a veiled reference to writers such as the U.S. scribe, Robert Ruark, whose ties to London and Nairobi were all too obvious.

Ultimately, however, this conflation of Mau Mau and the Red Scare served to becloud the true issues at the heart of the conflict—land, white supremacy, colonialism, brutal exploitation. In the long run compliant journalists simply extended the deathly agony of a doomed regime. The Colonial Office exposed how misguided ideology can mislead easily when it announced proudly in mid-1953 that "since Soviet policy is to make use of organizations such as Mau Mau the fact that there is no proof that there is a connection must not obscure the presumption that there may well be one…" It "goes too far," it was said authoritatively, to make it "appear that absence of evidence plus indigenous African background means there is no connection…"[74] In other words, as was to be suggested later: the absence of evidence was not the evidence of absence. Those seeking to show how the movement against Jim Crow was motivated similarly by Communists often were driven by a similarly wacky premise.

But it was easier to point the finger of accusation at what came to be called the "Evil Empire" rather than have the actual Empire come to grips with the reasons for its imminent downfall. As was often the case with Kenya, that a sovereign African state sat on its border was perceived as a chronic cause of regional instability—and this too had a Soviet angle. In a "Top Secret" report in late 1947, grave concern was raised about the construction of a hospital by the Soviet Union in Ethiopia and suspicion that this might be little more than a Trojan Horse shrouding subversion against Kenya in the first place.[75] "When the chaps came up from Nairobi the other day to talk about frontier problems," said London's man in Addis Ababa in late 1952 in a "secret" message, "they all told me that the rumor was not only rife but growing in Nairobi that a Russian influence was behind the Mau Mau and that the emissaries were leaving here in a constant stream." This was "nonsense," he argued—but the tale would not die. For the notion was then splattered across the pages of a prominent U.S. newsweekly, then "[C.L.] Sulzberger of the 'New York Times'" ambled into town "with excitement about this story."

It was "most ill-advised," he added wearily "to allow the impression to grow that the Russian legation and hospital here is so clover that it can run Mau Mau and other activities at a distance of 1[,]000 miles" but he did not quite realize that this story served a larger purpose of discrediting the resistance and their grievances while associating them with the criminal excesses of the Stalin regime.[76] "There is a great deal of loose thinking" on "Communist activities in Ethiopia," it was cautioned but this skepticism did not prevail.[77]

Actually, the very existence of a sovereign Ethiopia which could rightfully have proper diplomatic relations with the Soviet Union—just like Britain for that matter—was seen as a danger in London,[78] just as Washington was seized with the idea that the revolt against Jim Crow too was driven by Moscow.[79]

Of course, Washington had its own policy toward Addis Ababa, which did not always dovetail with London's concerns and such fissures served to erode the basis of support for colonialism. In March 1953, for example, the recently installed administration of Dwight D. Eisenhower was contemplating a state visit with all the trimmings for the Emperor. The President's Republican Party had once maintained a virtual monopoly of the votes of African Americans and still held hope that this stranglehold might return—rubbing shoulders with the diminutive Ethiopian ruler could not hurt these chances. Besides, still seeking to curry favor with Washington as a counterweight to London and other colonial powers, Addis Ababa had dispatched troops to fight alongside those of the United States in Korea.

As the time approached for this historic visit, White House staff jockeyed to insure that certain African Americans "should be invited to [the] state dinner," a move not designed to curry favor in the reactionary Southern states, where blacks' plight seemed to be a nineteenth century throwback. "Dr. Bunche is a big name and merits consideration," for invitation, it was suggested though there was worry that an invitation to a particular Negro "Assistant Secretary" might make "other Assistant Secretaries jealous" since those of this rank were "generally not invited to such affairs." This was a "valid exception," it was said, as a form of affirmative action prematurely began to take hold. This did not extend to the flamboyant Harlem congressman, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr., —"I certainly wouldn't put [him] on the dinner list," it was stated brusquely.[80] Secretary of State John Foster Dulles, not known for his friendliness to the Negro, pulled out all the stops for Ethiopia.[81]

After much rigmarole, the visit of His Imperial Majesty with the requisite pomp and circumstance occurred, coincidentally enough, just after the U.S. high court ruled that Jim Crow—thought to be divinely ordained in certain circles—was actually unconstitutional. The emperor was lionized as he huddled at Howard University with leading Negro educators and visited Congressman Powell's church in Harlem and other landmarks in Chicago.[82] The grateful Emperor Haile Selassie I thanked "My Dear President" (he termed himself "your good friend") for his effusive courtesies during his lengthy journey and "in token of my great esteem and friendship" forwarded a "sack of our best coffee which comes from that very region (Kaffa) from whence the name of coffee itself originated."[83] It is not known if the abstemious chief executive partook

of this thoughtful gift but it is evident that what it suggested continued to percolate: as African Americans began to gain a semblance of civil equality, this increased the possibility that states besides Ethiopia would gain sovereignty—and this decidedly included Addis' neighbor—Kenya—the State of Emergency notwithstanding.

9

"Mau Mau"

"We view with alarm the terrorist methods of the Mau Mau in Kenya."

These ominous words did not come from London but from a 1953 resolution of the organization founded by Du Bois: the NAACP. This resolution was reflective of how the NAACP began to adhere to Washington's strictures as the price of the ticket for a semblance of civil equality. African Americans began to attain this exalted status just as Africans in Kenya began to surge—and the two were related: both developments were thought to be inspired by Moscow and both were seen as part of a larger global struggle. So motivated, the rising power—the United States—began to impose its will on the declining United Kingdom and its satellites, which was to spell ill for the settler regime in Nairobi. There was a basis, in other words, for the retreat of the NAACP. Put simply, there were emoluments to be doled out to those willing to tack their sails in accord with the prevailing winds,[1] just as there were penalties for those unwilling to go along, particularly Du Bois[2] and Robeson.[3]

Bunche was able to leap gracefully from a heavy teaching load at Howard University to the stratosphere of the United Nations. This situation left Robeson aggrieved. "I know Kenyatta," he reminded the baseball star, Jackie Robinson, who stood with the NAACP. "He's a highly educated man," he said in reprimand.[4] Ironically, in mid-1932 the NAACP leader, Walter White, once spoke derisively to Bunche of Blaise Diagne, the chief African collaborator with French colonialism. He "does not hesitate," said White, "to assert that he is a Frenchman first and a Negro afterward. The French are exceedingly shrewd in this business of taking a native, giving him office and doing most of their dirty [work] through them."[5] Substitute the United States for France and one could easily describe Bunche a few decades later; Kenyatta got a hint of this in 1946 when he vainly sought to reach his former student.[6]

The CAA sensed this gathering trend but it was no less upset with the NAACP resolution: "either the African is our brother or he isn't," said this left-leaning grouping; "we fight with him or against him." The NAACP resolution did not even deign to mention the name of the persecuted Kenyatta, moaned the CAA, which was noticeably reprehensive.[7] But the Association was not alone.[8]

The CAA was pursuing a different path which was to conclude with its liquidation.[9]

Still, the organization went down unapologetically with both guns blazing. Thus, in early 1954, when a good deal of the nation—or at least that part which was paying attention—was panic-stricken about an alleged "anti-white" and "anti-Christian" uprising in Kenya that seemed to spell doom for all those who valued white supremacy, the CAA by contrast avowed that it was "widely known in England for a long time that the 'suppression of the Mau Mau' was being used as an excuse for the most brutal genocidal crimes against the Kikuyu people…"[10] While others repeated baseless prevarications about terror inflicted on European settlers, the Council noted forlornly in mid-1954 that the "killings" of Africans pass the "5[,]000 'official' mark" as the "'dirty war' gets dirtier…"[11]

These bold words were bolstered by action. Unlike the NAACP, the CAA maintained close contact with the anticolonial resistance. Shortly after the State of Emergency, Kenyatta's ally—J.A. Murumbi—wrote W. Alphaeus Hunton and enclosed "copies of documents which have been released by the Kenya African Union since the Emergency was introduced in this country…" Unbowed, he added, "all over Africa today there is a stir" and "we need your help" to maintain and accelerate it.[12] In response Hunton—leading an organization with unique financial problems—forwarded $100.[13] Then the CAA arranged to forward a heftier $500 for the "Kenyatta Defense Fund."[14]

It was in April 1954 that the Council organized in Harlem's Friendship Baptist Church a conference in support of the liberation of Africa from colonial rule. They sought to "organize a campaign of direct assistance to the heroic peoples of Kenya" and that a "nationwide Kenya Aid Committee be established…" The goal was to "raise the sum of $5000 in the three month period" ending in August 1954, with an emphasis on sending overseas "dried milk, vitamin pills and first aid supplies…" Peter Koinange, then in London, was to be reached in this regard, whereas "local aid committees" were to be "established in each borough of New York City," along with a "series of monthly forums…"[15]

June 1954 found CAA activists amassing on Harlem's busiest thoroughfares as they delivered to passing motorists and pedestrians alike the news from Kenya. For more than two hours speaker after speaker stepped up to the microphone and explained in concrete terms the clear connections between colonialism and Jim Crow, the common objectives that linked the darkest of them all in Kenya and Harlem. "There was a good response,"[16] was the organization's conclusion—but that was insufficient to halt their energetically assisted slide toward oblivion. Nevertheless, this solidarity was taken seriously in Nairobi. "There is no doubt," editorialized one colonial newspaper, "that the Mau Mau has been greatly encouraged and strengthened by expressions of support from overseas."[17]

African Americans not of the left also sought in their own way to aid the struggle in Kenya—though the NAACP's jab at the resistance was all too suggestive of their timidity. The organization's Youth Secretary addressed his membership at Harvard and Radcliffe in 1953 and boldly echoed the CAA line—while referring indelicately to "Mau Mau terrorists."[18] But this tactless reference to freedom fighters was indicative of the problem the NAACP encountered when it was caught between supporting African resistance while adhering to Cold War norms. Thus, when the labor leader, A. Philip Randolph contacted NAACP

leader, "Dear Roy" Wilkins, he reflected this abject tension: he had been "asked" to "make a contribution to" Koinange's "Kenya Publication Fund" but, he cautioned, "since one has to be careful about groups" to "get mixed up with," he desired "to know from you if this group is free from Communist control." Since Koinange was not unfriendly to CAA, it was unclear how this slippery term—"control"—could be defined.[19]

After all, Koinange himself—and his former college chum, St. Clair Drake—feared they were under surveillance given the temper of the times. When the anthropologist sought to contact his Kenyan friend he sent a "letter by Moore, my former student who is teaching in Ethiopia. I do so," said Drake, "because I don't want it opened and censored, and it [is] just possible this *could* happen. Why don't you send the reply the same way," he suggested.[20] [emphasis-original]

The U.S. authorities were not sure what to make of Koinange. At one point they dismissed Kenyatta as "an old man who enjoys his creature comforts," while Drake's comrade was "more likely than Kenyatta to be viewed with alarm."[21] Contrastingly, Koinange was "not known to be a Communist," the Embassy in London was told, while Kenyatta "was at one time a Communist Party member" and was "now a Trotskyist."[22]

Whatever the case, neither Kenyan was embraced at this juncture as an alternative to coziness with the settler regime; Drake, for his part, was continuing to drum up support for the Kenyan student at Lincoln University, R. Mugo Gatheru.[23] The *New York Times* provided its implicit blessing by giving his case non-hostile coverage. However, unlike Drake, the newspaper of record emphasized that he "he had obtained a visa fraudulently by concealing the fact that he previously had been denied one…"[24] The NAACP had reservations about him too. Their leader, Walter White, was informed that he was "suspected of being a member of this African secret society"—"MAU MAU" was spelt out boldly to stress its fearsomeness.[25]

A NAACP member from Kalamazoo, Michigan, sensed what was at stake in this controversy. The manner of "representation" of "Mau Mau" she said, "seems to me to set before the American people the idea that the Negro regardless of a civilized veneer is actually incapable of a real civilized conduct…" Would not this reflect on the Negro and give heart to those who backed Jim Crow? Besides, she added, "the white race always seems to feel that when they usurp the power of any other race they are right…I wonder if the Mau Mau society were white like the Ku Klux Klan & it [attacked]…the colored race…would [there] be such an uproar?"[26]

After contemplating the various angles, finally Walter White decided that Gatheru's was a "case in which we can move with assurance in view of the number of first-rate non-Communist people such as St. Clair Drake and Horace Mann Bond who vouch for him…"[27] Yet, Drake, who was no dummy, did not quite grasp how the chill brought by the anticommunist expansion was handcuffing his efforts in support of African liberation. "One of the charges that may be made against Gatheru," he said at one point, "is that he has been intimately associated with me and I am either 'subversive' or have had 'subversive' connections…" Well, Drake claimed angrily, "I am not a so-called 'partisan of peace' declaring

that South Korea started the war and that we are guilty of germ warfare." With escalating intensity, he declared, "I do not support or belong to the Council on African Affairs led by Du Bois, Robeson and Hunton." Yes, it was true, he did collaborate with the National Negro Congress and the Progressive Party and, yes, he did write articles for the similarly left-wing *New Masses* but that was all ancient history, he claimed.[28] The campaign for a free Kenya was weakened when their stateside supporters could not unite. This was notably unfortunate since Drake had as much direct knowledge about East Africa as any. "I saw a great deal of Koinange during 1947 and 1948," he confessed, "for I was in Britain studying race relations in urban areas."[29]

But as Drake saw it, this visa denial was due to the perception that Koinange may have had ties to the Council, which left the rapidly graying anthropologist quite furious. This slap-in-the-face had very "serious implications," he claimed. "Some of us," he continued, "including Edith Sampson, Bill Townsend, Harold Snell, Claude Barnett," and others, "have been working like hell for the last few years trying to offset the activities of this Commie group. I spend literally over half of my spare-time," he declared, "working with African students," seeking "to keep the fellows on 'our side'," that is, with the North Atlantic bloc—yet, the thanks he received was being grouped nonetheless with the likes of Du Bois and Robeson: where was the justice? Koinange, he asserted, was "totally committed to our way of life and we [have] talked at great length about how to checkmate activity and propaganda in East Africa…"[30]

It was understandable why Koinange and Gatheru may have preferred to reside in the United States, since either probably would have been consigned to the dankest gallows upon landing in Nairobi or Mombasa, while as the resistance rose in intensity, hostility toward Africans escalated in London which had become the site of an influx from their African and Caribbean colonies. By one account, there was a "grand total" of 557 students from East and Central Africa in the United Kingdom in 1951, compared with 2,009 from West Africa and 1,114 from the comparatively smaller West Indies.[31] Yet months after the declaration of the State of Emergency, a report from the Labour Party indicated that "the number of colonial students in Britain has been increasing rapidly since the war…"[32] Rising correspondingly were complaints from these students who were often struck by the drabness, dirtiness and unfriendliness that marked London, which may have inspired California dreaming among some of the more adventurous.[33]

Reciprocally, some of Her Majesty's subjects felt that Labour was much too forthcoming toward the African, whereas they wanted London to hunker down and protect the Empire. Certainly that was the view of the Nairobi organ, the *East African Standard*. "The migration of coloured people" to London it maintained, "has begun to create a problem. This week trade union leaders are to discuss a proposal" that "there should be a 'colour bar' in British industry…" Beaming, the paper continued, "here in East Africa, where the problems of multi-racialism are in the forefront, those who wrestle with them… will not regret that the British people have now the opportunity of dealing with similar problems in their own life…"[34]

Such attitudes were festering like mold after an intense hurricane. "Most people honestly think that were Labour returned [to power], they would immediately

hand over government here to the African," said Gwen Jones, writing nervously from Nairobi. "My husband and I arrived here some three months ago with no prejudices," she claimed in the Spring of 1955; "in our home in Clapham we had entertained many West Africans" but "here," she argued "the African is quite different. He is mostly dirty" and "totally lacking in a sense of responsibility and very ignorant in every way." When she first ascertained that "there were three rates of pay—first for Europeans, next for Asians and lastly for Africans," she was "horrified, but soon learned of the reason, especially so far as the African was concerned…" It was their "laziness" that was at fault. "The white settlers here seem to feel that Labour cares for every race but themselves," she cried, "My husband Llewellyn George Jones, who is now working as a Reader on the 'East African Standard' was Labour Party agent for Harrow Central during the 1950 general election and is known to you personally," she said to a Labour chieftain—"we have 'no axe to grind,'" she asserted.[35]

The perception that Labour was not as resolute as the Tories in protecting colonialism was not helpful to their electoral fortunes. Besides, the Cold War with its demonizing of all things "socialist" did not necessarily aid the party of Clement Atlee either.[36] In such a moldy and decaying atmosphere where even some on the left were frantically seeking to adapt to a perceived conservative ascendancy, it was understandable why the otherwise thoughtful, St. Clair Drake, would seek to fashion his beliefs accordingly. But Drake—who Gatheru thought "looks like a Kikuyu from the Fort Hall District" or "like a Chagga from Moshi near Kilimanjaro"[37]—was not alone.[38]

There were related problems. The White House had a "problem of getting colored people cleared by the FBI," for high-level posts, not least in Africa where their presence would serve to blunt the obvious allegation that Washington was indifferent to the continent's aspirations. As Africa lurched toward independence, Washington needed to reveal a receding anti-African bias—but how could it do so if Negroes were not full citizens? The White House's language, however, belied their goals for one official asserted "there was practically no Negro, even Ralph Bunch[e] who could come through an FBI check lily white, because all their organizations had been infiltrated at one time or another"—or, to put it another way: as the United States was moving to elevate the erstwhile polecat status of the Negro, they had to confront the problem that previously it was mostly Communists who had embraced these outliers and treated them as equals. Bravely, Secretary of State John Foster Dulles requested that Eisenhower himself, whose fondness for strolls on golf courses was notorious, "take up the problem" since his department had been "very particular about getting lily white clearances on everybody, but it is impossible to do this with Negroes," which could hinder the execution of U.S. policy in Africa most notably.[39]

For the pressure on Washington was to adapt to civilized norms when it came to the treatment of African Americans, particularly in its dealings with a former Slave South that saw no need for an adjustment. These conflicting customs erupted untidily in the midst of the State of Emergency when segregationist Governor James Byrnes of South Carolina arrived in town to "have lunch with the President on a private matter. He telephoned," Secretary Dulles "to say

that he would accept the U.N. delegate job" that had been offered. Dulles, by his own admission, "was delighted"—but there was one niggling issue: there was fear that Byrnes "would object to a Negro" on his staff, which compromised Washington's attempt to inoculate itself against charges of racism by parading African Americans in global arenas. There was a "lengthy discussion" internally about this that "went on for some time" with Dulles expressing concern that the U.N. delegation would "become like" New York "where a Protestant, a Catholic, a Jew and an Italian were on everything"—that is, a fear that affirmative action and quotas would be extended to the otherwise persecuted, Then Dulles began to yield, noting that "if we didn't have a Negro woman, Mrs. Sulzberger," part of the powerful family that controlled the influential *New York Times* was "intelligent and Jewish" and would suffice—though how her melanin quotient (or lack thereof) would help in Africa was left unclear.[40]

As it turned out, the targeted Negro candidate, the spouse of the publisher Robert Vann, who owned the important Negro newspaper, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, demurred. She was "quite upset about all of the publicity which had her as the Ambassador to Haiti," followed by the "subsequent story that Haiti didn't want a Negro or a woman," followed by "the stories" that "she would be named to the U.N. Delegation…" She felt like a thrice whacked ping-pong ball and withdrew her name from consideration. Stung, Dulles "asked her to reconsider" but she was simply "not in the mood" and Washington lost an opportunity to consider whether Byrnes would be sufficiently adventurous to allow a Negro woman to work beside him.[41]

Her retreat occurred at an inopportune moment for at that juncture Washington was continuing to grapple with an issue that had bedeviled it for decades—how India intersected with Kenya: The presence of an active source of "anti-West, anti-U.S. propaganda in the activities of the Indian information service" was disturbing, particularly since it was reaching "beyond East Africa,"[42] to London itself where a sizeable Indian and African population was proliferating.[43]

The nagging suspicion that South Asians were behind the resistance also had occurred to some in London. Yes, claimed the *Daily Telegraph*, "Mau Mau" was enmeshed in "anti-Europeanism" and expressed a "revulsion from Christianity and the controls of civilization"—this was "obvious." Not so obvious, however, was that they were "schooled" by "some of the Indian traders, lawyers and politicians whom they meet in the towns"; it was said huffily, "there can be little doubt that a small group of perhaps 20 Indians have been behind much of the recent happenings."[44] When Max Yergan passed through his old haunts in New Delhi in early 1954 he shared his "opinion that the Mau Mau leaders in Kenya were being exploited by Communists," many of whom were South Asian: Yergan was "of the opinion that the Indians in East Africa hope to supplant the whites as the dominant group" and, yes, "Mr. Nehru," the prime minister, was a "semi-dictator."[45]

Yet the dilemma of the Empire was no better expressed when a leading British military official made remarks in the press about the potential in East Africa for a large "native" force to replace the Indian Army in the defense of the Commonwealth, in light of Indian independence. Yet, William Dimoline was remonstrated by a Cape Town interlocutor who none too gently informed him

that the "suggestion has made quite a stir in political circles in South Africa. As you know, they do not approve the arming or training of the native!"[46]

Even before the State of Emergency, Washington was expressing anxious trepidations about Nairobi's policy toward Africans and Asians. The consul general witnessed a large meeting sponsored by the Kenya African Union and the East African Indian National Congress which was attended exclusively by Asians and Africans. Almost 4000 present passed resolutions "condemning the 'racial issues.'" Kenyatta himself spoke, along with Koinange, and the former leader forebodingly "recalled a similar type of meeting in 1923 and remarked at that time the problems were exactly the same."[47]

Washington should not have been overly surprised that New Delhi was concerned with settler colonialism, particularly since the racism that accompanied these regimes invariably ensnared South Asians. Nor should Washington have been surprised that India's propaganda against this pestilence stretched beyond East Africa since settler colonialism stretched southward to the Rhodesias. At this juncture, even long-time settlers such as Stewart Gore-Brown in what is now Zambia was appalled by a kind of racism that was now routine in Nairobi. Shops and post offices often barred indigenes arbitrarily making them stand in the rain. They were jammed into segregated buses and train cars that would have insulted self-respecting cattle. As in the United States, men were called "boys" irrespective of age. Indigenes were often barred from skilled jobs. While Africans made do in slums and hovels, he luxuriated in a mansion that featured a moat-like lake with crocodiles (though it was unclear if it was designed to keep out the Africans) with arched terraces, rose gardens, wine cellars, and a magnificent library. Routinely he enjoyed five course meals with guinea-fowl soufflé, saddle of hartebeest, jugged warthog or duiker stew and fine wines by uniformed servants in pillbox hats. Though he was a supposed liberal, he did not hesitate to beat his African servants if they "disobeyed;" it was apposite to draw connections between the Rhodesias and Kenya, not only because of the similar social conditions, since by 1953 a tarmac road had been built from Lusaka into Tanganyika, then on to Kenya, facilitating commerce and sharing of experiences between and among the colonies. Even the most resolute white supremacist—or mathematician—in what was called Northern Rhodesia should have recognized that this system was not sustainable, particularly since by the mid-twentieth century there were a mere 20,000 settlers surrounded by almost 2 million Africans.[48]

Zambia was not unique. In Eritrea during the occupation of fascist Italy, indigenes were expected to step into the gutter rather than sully a pavement on which a European walked—and if you did not, the reply was a prompt beating. In Asmara, Eritreans were consigned to the stinking warren of dwellings around the market, while the Europeans lived in palatial villas. Indigenes were barred from restaurants, bars and hotels and made to form separate queues at post offices and banks. Eritrea once was called the epicenter of racial segregation—though its neighbor, Kenya, could rightfully object.[49] Again, there was a material basis for this, for as one historian has observed, "whatever his background, and no matter whether he came to East Africa directly from Europe, or via the Natal or Transvaal, every white man who disembarked from the boat to Mombasa

became an instant aristocrat"—and gained an interest in the perpetuation of African subordination.[50]

Surely these forms of apartheid were interrelated and reinforced one another. At least that is what the elite Council on Foreign Relations, based in the most posh precinct of Manhattan, was informed in the Spring of 1953. Addressing this choice gathering, Dr. E.B. Worthington, secretary of the Scientific Council for Africa South of the Sahara, acknowledged that "one fortifies the other. When a native in Rhodesia learns of what is going on in Kenya, he is naturally reinforced in his own actions." Yet he was not sanguine about Africans' future, since they were "only two generations" from the "Dark Ages"; thus, he added disconsolately, "one cannot trust even those Kikuyu who have been faithful servants for years and in whom one had complete faith only six months ago…"[51]

What allowed a tiny minority to dominate a huge majority? Well, the settlers were not without weapons—or allies—as was evident when a conference on African defense gathered at Pretoria's initiative in Nairobi, with delegates from London, Paris, Brussels, Lisbon, Rome—and Washington.[52] The settlers thought they would continuously possess a powerful patron in Washington, headquarters of a nation which began as a settler regime battling indigenes and which now thought it had reason to believe that African resistance was a simple surrogate for a despicable Communist onslaught. This was a message propounded by the herd of journalists and writers who made it to Nairobi as the State of Emergency waxed.[53]

Foremost among the explainers and chroniclers of the colony and its peculiar folkways was the U.S. writer, Robert Ruark, also a novelist of note, who specialized in juicily garish tales about Kenya. About thirty-four at the time of the State of Emergency, he came from a poor North Carolina family which sank to more humble circumstances still during the Depression. He did not flinch at the idea that he was the "poor man's Hemingway," since, he declared, "we both have a moustache, like men, women, whiskey, travel, hunting, fishing, dogs," though "[I] have shot more elephants [and] undoubtedly made a great deal more money,"[54] which was probably true, given his penthouse in London and other global residences. Ruark was *the* man to speak with in the United States about Africa; eventually he penned a column syndicated in 104 newspapers, published five days a week, fifty weeks a year.[55]

He emphasized that "the European is a tiny minority, some 30,000 in a sea of five million blacks" and was in a peril that Euro-Americans should not ignore. Addressing the readers of the mass-market flagship publication of the staggeringly wealthy Henry Luce, he drew explicit parallels between the colonizing process in North America and East Africa during the days when "the only good Injun was a dead Injun and the red man was listed as a varmint." Almost sadly, he remarked that Nairobi "cannot deal so summarily with the [Africans] as we dealt bluntly and brutally with our aboriginals…" Further drawing the parallel, he observed that "the Kenya white man" referred to the "Mau Mau" as "Mickey Mice."[56]

The other leading voice who sought to explain the colony to a U.S. audience was the noted newspaper columnist, C.L. Sulzberger, a member of the family that

owned the *New York Times*. Nairobi, readers were told in late 1952, was a "bustling boom town, in some emotional respects comparable to our own nineteenth century western cities…" As in the United States where gathering opposition to Jim Crow was fomenting unease, in Nairobi, readers were informed "those who are now being driven by frustration to the black magic of their past may at some future date be attracted to Red magic."[57]

Because of its settler caste, bloody unrest, and apparent similarity to the United States itself, Kenya tended to receive more attention than other African nations and, in a sense, became a synecdoche for the entire continent. In "economy and society" said the *Times,* Kenya could "perhaps be compared roughly to that of the American South of George Washington's day. It is a world of 5000 acre farms. The sons of aristocratic families, somewhat akin to the Cavaliers of the South of Colonial America, played a large role in its short history." Nairobi, it was said, "is a Jamestown of this century."[58] Once, a visiting journalist seemed to suggest that his solidarity extended beyond the rhetorical, observing that "white skins are so few that even a passing stranger"—perhaps the writer?—"is a very welcome addition to the patrols that protect the suburbs of Nairobi and the farms." Moreover, "young men occasionally have their holsters tied down for a draw in the fashion of the heroes of Western films," a point bound to get the blood racing in North America.[59]

Knowing an effective approach when it saw it, the colonial press also took to this tack, with one organ instructing its readers, "it would do some of us good to read once again" the "struggle of the Red Indians in America." Unlike the African, however, the indigenous American was a "magnificent chap" whereas in East Africa the "problem here is infinitely easier…"[60]

This analogy to the United States was not peculiar to Kenya. During the fascist occupation, the leader of the Italian regime in Eritrea, argued that the indigenes were a "hindrance." "Whether we like it or not, we will have to hunt him down and encourage him to disappear, just as has been done elsewhere with the Redskins, using all the methods of civilization—which the native instinctively hates—can provide: gunfire and a daily dose of firewater." The Italians believed fervently, not unlike many in North America, that the indigenes were destined to wither away, "ceding their land to a stronger, white-skinned race…"[61]

The *Times Literary Supplement* showed it was not immune to these comparisons when its writer claimed that "Mau Mau stories have almost begun to rival Cowboys and Indians in their ingredients of excitement."[62] For the colonizer, the battles over racist segregation in the United States became a touchstone, at once suggesting that the struggle in Kenya was not unique and, perhaps, more sympathy from Washington would be appropriate. The troubles in Nairobi, one London organ veritably screamed, meant that the British should "NOT BE TOO SMUG ABOUT ALABAMA!"[63] The anticommunist Socialist, R.H.S. Crossman, took a different approach, arguing that Nairobi was "in fact…a black Chicago with Mau Mau leaders playing the role of Al Capone, and the Police regarded by the African as his traditional enemy…"[64]

The son of the celebrated gossip columnist, Walter Winchell, approached the bilateral relation between the colony and its Washington patron from a

different angle. He visited Kenya during the height of the resistance and left impressed—with the colonizer. In an article reprinted by Nairobi propagandists, he acidly observed that "intellectuals find it easy to speak of 'harsh British rule' while pretending that excesses against our Southern Negro population do not exist…" This was clearly fallacious, he thought. "We ourselves once had a frontier," he reminded. "People worked hard for America, and we had some savages that opposed this endeavour," and they had to be crushed in a manner akin to what was occurring in Kenya. He also reminded that "several of our states found it necessary to dispatch Army tanks and soldiers with fixed bayonets to enforce a ruling of the Supreme Court," so from whence came the waspish critique of Kenya, he wondered. If some of these critics were to "watch Kenya in action for a few weeks," he advised, "they might find themselves with nothing more derogatory to write about, and then they'd have to look at Tennessee or Alabama."[65]

Continuing the parallels, Graham Greene contrarily compared the letters of the Kenyan patriot, Dedan Kimathi to "the last letters of Sacco and Vanzetti: I am explaining clearly," he added in heartfelt words, "that there is no Mau Mau but the poor man is the Mau Mau and if so, it is only Mau Mau which can finish Mau Mau and not bombs and other weapons."[66]

But of all those who sought to draw parallels between the settling of North America and the process then unfolding in East Africa, it was the alumnus of the then segregationist University of North Carolina—Ruark—who was most effective. Ruark, who freely employed homophobic slurs, was an angry man, lashing out at the co-eds at his alma mater for trivial reasons—he was "angry at women in general," according to his supportive biographer. He also had an acute mercenary impulse—"I don't do anything unless it's for money," he said—which served him well in seeking to understand the dynamics of settler colonialism. Ruark arrived in a tense Kenya in January 1953 and quickly visited European farm settlements. Rapidly adapting, he noted, "I found myself wearing a gun on my hip like everybody else. And sleeping with it under my pillow." He also quickly adapted to the trend of attributing the resistance to the machinations of Moscow, while luring his U.S. audience—or at least the Euro-American segment, which was thought to be inclusive of the entire nation—by identifying the colonial settlers closely with a heroic war against indigenes: "When the Indians threatened our safety and our homes," he argued, "we shot them out of hand and sent armies to hunt down the incorrigibles." Yet today the faint of heart made this "impossible" though there were "only a few thousand whites [*sic*] against many million blacks in East Africa, and international sentiment" opposed the "mass elimination of the opposition." Above all, the wrenching changes in Kenya reminded him of the simultaneous tensions that gripped his homeland, for example, North Carolina, site of sit-ins and mass demonstrations; Ruark's novel about Kenya and the insurgency, *Something of Value*, emerged as the movement against Jim Crow was reigniting and, thus, captured an emerging sentiment as it soared to bestseller status and a Hollywood blockbuster featuring Sidney Poitier and Rock Hudson—who Ruark thought was "queer as a 'three peseta piece,'" long before the star exited from the closet.

In many ways it was Ruark who defined Kenya—and by inference, the continent as a whole—for the U.S. audience and the picture he painted of the resistance and Africans was not enticing. It was an unbelievably gory novel with graphic descriptions of killings and mutilations, dogs and cats with their stomachs slit open, hung up on gate posts while still alive. His otherwise approving biographer remonstrates Ruark for his failure to show "the genuinely dark—that is, racist—side of white Kenyan society. If the novel does have a serious failing, that is it. There were many white supremacists in Kenya, of the extreme right-wing Afrikaner stamp…"[67] Yet the then young novelist, Philip Roth, captured why this novel was so popular in the United States since Ruark's words could not "help but reflect a few of the changes that have taken place in our attitude"—meaning Euro-Americans—toward U.S. Negroes.[68]

This was not the opinion of the novel held by the reviewer in the *New York Times*, lavishing praise in the Spring of 1955 as the strains induced by desegregation increased. "For the first time," enthused the reviewer, "an American writer has incorporated the full extent of this reversion to barbarism" of Africans. It was "the most sensational novel of the year." It was "huge and frightening," it was said, as Ruark "painted an extraordinarily detailed and vivid picture." It was "an astonishing virtuoso performance," a "pile driver of a book."[69] Yet years after this review was published, the historian, David Anderson, summed up best why the film based on this novel struck a chord: it was a "tale that reflected America's civil rights struggle," he said.[70]

Ruark freely admitted that he had studied the oeuvre of Elspeth Huxley, the Kenyan writer who had considerable experience in the United States, to gain insight into the nation he was portraying. The racism of the settlers was slighted, of course and, instead, was idealized. Ruark's own roots in Jim Crow North Carolina were no doubt a factor here. When the scholar, Terry Wieland, visited Nairobi in 1972 he found Ruark's novel "displayed prominently in bookshops," indicating its continuing relevance. "Even today," he asserted a few years ago, "you will find the book on shelves in any literate household from the Cape to the end of the English-speaking world"—though the writer should have added the important qualifier: any "literate [European] household."[71]

Posed on the cover of *Newsweek* with a hat and lion in the background, the moustachioed Ruark was said to be the author of what "promises to be one of the biggest moneymakers in literary history"—his book had "already sold about 80,000 copies" and the "author's royalty is 75 cents a copy…" The book was being "translated into ten languages, allowing Ruark to build up his foreign currency reserves in such far flung countries as Australia, Sweden, and Italy…" A publicity poster for the novel featured an African with a machete facing a European with the inscription: "the most dangerous big man game in Africa—man!"[72] White men of the former slave South, who somehow felt they were the ones under siege, could easily identify with Ruark's prose.

Actually, this novel has not withstood the test of time but, instead, is reflective of a bygone era. Visitors to Kenya for a safari include "the pansy chap, a lawyer from Los Angeles, who ran after all the black boys. Peter caught him with one of the porters…" In a Ruark staple guaranteed to appeal to a segment of the

U.S. audience, a character compared the former Slave South to Kenya: "your attitude out here reminds me very much of the way it works—or used to work—in the South. You sort of treat 'em as not too bright, call everybody 'boy', whether they're young or old. You have them in your homes and you depend on them entirely for the success of your work but you treat them as if they were some special sort of cattle…" The reply to this peroration was curt, while another character replied: "I used to get so damn sick of people in England once they'd heard I was East African, reading me long lectures of what we're doing wrong with the native. The only native they ever saw [was] a drunken American Negro GI…"[73]

Ruark had warmed up for this novel's grand success by spending six weeks in Kenya on safari and publishing a book—*Horn of the Hunter*—that the *Times* claimed "owes much to Hemingway,"[74] which was appropriate since Ruark considered the Illinoisan his hero.[75] Ruark had caught a wave in the budding U.S. interest in Africa, driven by events in Kenya, that he rode relentlessly. "Since TWA [the airline] is entering a campaign to promote big game safaris in Africa," he wrote in the Spring of 1951, they should be interested in publishing articles he peddled.[76] Meetings were being held to organize the nation's hunters—"there was much interest shown," Ruark was informed.[77] These men, Ruark included, were bent on reducing the population of elephants in the first place, and he had great "experience [in] shooting these animals," particularly "at close range." He was told to bring along his "Stetson as this [was] much more imposing from a photographic point of view when sitting on the top of a rhino or elephant," as opposed to the "poor type of hat sold here" in Kenya.[78]

Not least due to this attention to detail, Ruark's testosterone infused prose helped him to leapfrog the pack and become one of his nation's most popular writers. Just before the State of Emergency was declared, he already had a column syndicated by the arch-conservative *New York World Telegram & Sun,* which reached a reported 10 million readers. He also wrote lucrative pieces for *Esquire*, the *Saturday Evening Post* and *Collier's*, "all of which reach men who can afford to hunt," said one supporter. "The three things he has his heart set on are buff[alo], lion and rhino; he wants a leopard too" and "is particularly keen to shoot a stack of zebras, having a pet project to cover the walls of an entire room with their hides…"[79]

At a time when white masculinity was absorbing a perceived challenge at home and abroad at the hands of those—Africans and African Americans—upon whose backs this identity was built, Ruark of the former slave state of North Carolina, seemed to stand resolute, gun in hand, purple prose deployed. A *Newsweek* cover story of the era—"Whites against Blacks in Africa"—encoded brazenly a message that could be easily translated in the former Slave South.[80] Ruark, who spoke directly to these conflicted issues, had as a result "achieved just about every success available," *Newsweek* cheerfully asserted.[81] The Rolls-Royce he was buying was suggestive of how Ruark—and his words—resonated.[82] "Dear Edgar," he cozily addressed the controversial FBI director, J. Edgar Hoover, known to be Public Enemy No. 1 as far as Negroes were concerned: "As always I am glad to hear from you when you like something of mine…if you ever get tired of law enforcement my house in Spain is at your disposal

always."[83] The fortune he was earning allowed Ruark to indulge freely his taste in fine alcohol—which was highly developed. At one point, he recounted suffering a "nervous breakdown due to overwork, nervous tension, whiskey, too much travel and the usual. I was as goofy as Bugs Bunny for about a week"—hopefully, the penultimate chapters of his novel were not written during this period. For he was then enduring—as his biographer put it—"one of the most severe cases of delirium tremens," a "most direct cause for his collapse was too much liquor."[84]

The globally minded Ruark was a favorite in Nairobi. As his popularity was soaring, the colony's propaganda arm noted happily that the author published "five different articles about Kenya, all of which received wide publicity as syndicated material." His novel received a "warm reception" in Kenya, it was said—at least he thought so: "I've been here quite a spell," he said with folksy bonhomie, "and my nose is still unpunched. And this is a country where they punch first and reason why later."[85] Nairobi propagandists were no doubt elated when in his widely circulated column Ruark referred angrily to the resistance as "stupid sheep"—this insult "appeared in twenty nine newspapers in the [United States]," the authorities reported enthusiastically.[86]

Thus, the film version of Ruark's novel was lauded in the mainstream press. Little wonder. It featured a cameo introduction by Winston Churchill, signaling its alleged profundity. It was the "best known account of Mau Mau," asserts one well-informed analyst though he quickly adds that Ruark was "deplorably ignorant about Kenyan affairs."[87] Little matter. Readers and viewers alike were taken by Ruark's depiction of the Kenyan struggle. It "dramatizes with deliberate fair-mindedness," the *Christian Science Monitor* asserted.[88] "One of the best films of its kind yet made," said Britain's *Sunday Express*.[89] "The Negroes hail straight from Edgar Rice Burroughs," he of Tarzan fame, which the *London Times*, seemed to think was high praise.[90] The *New York Times* compared it to "Western massacre films," that is, a movie "about Indians and white settlers"; "in this connection," it was said, "Rock Hudson is not too likely as a white African, though he runs through a range of stalwart poses that might be visible on the Western plains…"[91] But Britain's *News of the World* seemed to sum up the judgment of history when their critic declared simply, "I came away with the feeling that Hollywood simply didn't begin to understand what was happening in Africa."[92]

The same might have been said of Ruark's apparent doppelganger—Ernest Hemingway, who frequently turned to Kenya for inspiration[93] and also engaged the liberation struggle,[94] albeit not as successfully, in the financial sense, as Ruark. Like Ruark, he was none too friendly to those of African origin, never caring that much for African Americans more particularly. When the Brooklyn Dodgers baseball team, recently integrated racially, visited Cuba, he invited the Euro-Americans to his home but barred all others,[95] suggestive of his attitude toward Africans.[96] He had arrived in East Africa as early as 1933 and eventually, as one biographer put it delicately, was "courting a Wakamba girl."[97] By 1954 he was "running with a fairly rough mob," as he told the writer, Peter Viertel and had "learned how to hunt pretty good with

[a] spear," which was "much deadlier than [a] rifle."[98] On one of his last safaris, the bearded and pudgy writer had to take precautions lest he encounter armed resistance by a group of Wakamba. Early in 1954 he endured a plane crash in the region, which sadly symbolized the Euro-American experience in East Africa.[99]

10

The United States Arms the Settlers?

William Baldwin had been in Kenya fighting the resistance for fifteen months and he was frustrated. The British Army was a "damned nuisance in the jungles of Kenya," he complained and being a U.S. national he thought more of his kind were necessary if the settler regime were not to collapse. As he saw it, the idea of a departure of the settlers would be like saying "the United States [should] be turned back to the American Indian." As he saw it, there was no reason whatsoever to give any quarter in squashing "the Mice"—this "army of apes that comprised the Mau Mau." This was "grim, horrible, necessary work"; thus, "in order to deal effectively with the Mau Mau problem, a number of concepts held dear in democratic societies must be discarded…" And while they were at it, they needed to smash the Asian population too: "the average Asian was utterly useless," why "some had even been caught supplying the Mau Mau with guns, ammunition, food and clothing…" Certainly, apartheid laws were a necessity: "if the European prefers to eat or view a movie without the proximity of a smelly, unclean native who may scratch himself and spit on the floor, that is his privilege."

Baldwin was not just a master of invective. He confessed that he had "killed one of the Mau Mau leaders, Ndurangu Maina and three of his aides…" Baldwin was a fixture at the "Langata Screening Camp outside Nairobi" and helped herd prisoners to the "Manyani Prison Camp" which held "18,000 Mau Mau prisoners," which was "one of the world's largest detention camps…"[1]

Baldwin, who grew up in Winnetka, Illinois, graduated from the University of Colorado in 1950 and arrived in Kenya on April 17, 1954. He had a comprehensive knowledge of weapons, courtesy of service as a Naval Air Force cadet. His starting salary in the counterinsurgency was $159.60 per month but was raised quickly to $201.60 per month. "British officials here seem delighted to have him," said the *New York Times*.[2] His reign of terror in Africa apparently did not harm his prospects back home for upon returning to the United States he wrote a series of articles for such newspapers as the *Philadelphia Bulletin* and the *Selma Journal*, in the heart of Dixie soon to be the site of a major antiracist confrontation.[3] Kenyan propagandists took note of the opinion of the *Savannah Press*

Review which deemed Baldwin to be "thoughtful and plain-spoken."[4] They also were pleased when Baldwin's handiwork was marked in the segregationist *States-Times* of Jackson, Mississippi.[5]

Baldwin was a cog in a machinery of death. "Bloody terror has been reigning for about a year-and-a-half already in Kenya," said one Moscow publication in early 1954. "Tens of thousands of people have been executed, killed, subjected to cruel torture. Entire villages have been set afire, women and children have been burned in homes," while hope had been drowned in "rivers of blood and oceans of tears." As for "Mau Mau," "no such organization has ever existed," it was contended stoutly—it was a "myth."[6] Tellingly, colonial propagandists when describing the notorious "screening" process that separated insurgents from those who were not, noted that the "interrogators" were described as being cloaked in "Ku-Klux-Klan hoods. Apparently, this device caused great consternation among those screened," it was said gloatingly.[7]

Not a myth was the fact that Baldwin's presence was welcome by Nairobi since early on the authorities conceded that any further call up—of reserves or conscripts—"would endanger the economy"; a "good many of those…had failed to report," in any case.[8] Discipline in the "Police Force" in which Baldwin served was "very poor" said the authorities, which may shed light on his depredations, though the "increased police recruitment from South Africa and Rhodesia, as well as from the United Kingdom"—deemed "essential"—was an indication that more types such as Baldwin from the United States would be equally welcome.[9]

Baldwin was not singular in his expatriation to this land of sorrow. While he was there, Dr. B.C. Swindle of New York was in charge of Animal Inspection and Quarantine at Kenya's Agricultural Research Service. This Doctor of Veterinary Medicine and graduate of Alabama Polytechnic Institute slept with a revolver strapped to his side.[10] These expatriations were welcomed by Nairobi. The State of Emergency had meant, according to Sir Michael Blundell, that "half the available European manpower between the ages of 18 and 45" were "mobilized for defense; this, he lamented, was "far greater than the contribution made during the 1939–1945 war in terms of manpower…"[11]

As the war in Kenya garnered global headlines along with the fierce battle to desegregate the United States itself, ineluctably some Euro-Americans felt their very way of life was at stake and this was worth fighting for. As a result, some crossed the ocean to take up arms, others volunteered to staff the massive prison camps that had developed, while others sought to lobby the authorities to back the besieged settler regime.

This was timely assistance indeed for at the same time that the colonizer was straining to suppress the Kenyan insurgency, they had their hands full trying to do the same thing in Malaya. One central problem was the attempt to deploy African troops in Southeast Asia while shielding them from the possibility of gaining experience in armed conflict that could be transferred easily back to East Africa. Desertion and absence without leave in Malaya by these forces was rampant,[12] signaling unease with the mission. Inexorably, there was a blending of the missions, as anti-insurgency operations in Kuala Lumpur were based on events in Nairobi[13]—and vice versa.[14] This was particularly true for the "pseudo"

operations in which William Baldwin participated, "false flag" operations designed to "smoke out" those sympathetic to insurgents.

The example of Sir Richard Catling, who was involved in both theatres—and Palestine as well (he was present when the King David Hotel was blown up)—suggests the interchangeability of these conflicts.[15] Sir Anthony Swann also served in Africa and Asia and acknowledges how the two battles influenced one another.[16]

Major General P.H.W. Brind, who discovered insurgent writings while fighting in Kenya, found distinct evidence of Pan-African thinking on the part of the insurgents—"certainly among [and] in these notebooks, yes."[17] F.G. Finch, who arrived in Kenya to fight in 1953 at the age of twenty-nine, admits that the rebels "probably heard a good deal of chatter about places like India and Burma" during the war with Japan and were influenced pervasively by it.[18]

The King's African Rifles were commanded by Lt. Col. G.H.H. Coles of Her Majesty's armed forces; he praised his forces who hailed mostly from northern Uganda. Idi Amin, the future dictator, was under his command—"he was then a Sergeant" and "he actually would tear ahead and catch [insurgents] and kill them rather than shoot them," "he was a savage," he added proudly.[19] "The very first person in my area to be shot by the Security Forces," said Kenyan official, W.H. Thompson, "fell to the gun of Sergeant Idi Amin…" He expressed no remorse at the unleashing of this "gun-toting beast" upon indigenes.[20]

There was a different form of Pan-Africanism, however, that was real and compelling. This came clear when South Africa's ambassador met with Secretary of State Dean Acheson in the early stages of the war in Korea. Though Ethiopia had dispatched troops to engage in this conflict, Pretoria's man said "it would be most unwise to weaken its position by sending forces to Korea." Pretoria thoughtfully made a "secret commitment…in the event of war with Russia" to deploy forces. Acheson "expressed his disappointment" and "pointed out that the [U.S.] forces were hard pressed in Korea." In response the Ambassador pointed out recent press reports indicating that Washington "did not wish very much help" from "colonial powers" due to "propaganda effects" and surely that would include South Africa. Acheson dissented, suggesting he would welcome aid from all corners.[21] Perhaps Pretoria was concerned with the recent U.S. decision to eliminate all "racial designations of blood donors" and a similar move by U.N. employees who demanded this before donating blood for the action in Korea.[22] Perhaps the "master race" in Pretoria thought their "pure" blood might be mixed with that of their presumed lessers if wounded on the battlefields of Korea. The Secretary of State may have left that meeting with second thoughts about the viability of an alliance with Pretoria in the context of a Cold War where Moscow was charging Washington with being a cats-paw of a settler regime in Africa—which included Kenya, a fortiori.

In fact, the colonial authorities kept a close eye on any hint of Pan-African solidarity in Kenya for it could foretell similar problems erupting in other settler regimes on the continent or suggest material aid from the western hemisphere which could augur troubles within the North Atlantic alliance. Hence, scrutiny was accorded the attempted joint African-Asian mass meeting of protest in

Nairobi timed to coincide with the celebration of the anniversary of the advent in settler colonialism in South Africa, as well as protest the deepening of apartheid: the police stepped in and banned this gathering.[23] The symbolic leader of the resistance, Dedan Kimathi, as a matter of course reflected Pan-African and global influences, which U.S. policy ignored at its own peril. The "British withdrawal from India had a profound effect" upon him, according to one analyst; besides, he "showed a liking for American paper-backed cowboy stories and thrillers…"[24] At times these Pan-African and U.S. influences were not exactly what the playbook of Du Bois and Robeson had in mind. The insurgent known as "General China" was irate about the "Lincoln bombers" used promiscuously against his forces.[25] When the freedom fighter, Gakaara wa Wanjau, was in detention in Kenya he was stunned when his interrogator "instructed us that we should properly refer to ourselves as 'Negroes'." He objected.[26]

What this Kenyan intellectual may not have quite realized is that the prisons in his homeland, then bursting at the seams, were also filled to the brim with cadre from an organization with deep roots in the United States—Moral Rearmament—and it is possible that one of their members insisted that the darker-skinned be addressed in a manner to which he had grown accustomed. MR took a particular interest in the massive prison camp at Athi River in Kenya. "This is the camp," said one of their leaders, "where the organizers and political brains of the Mau Mau have been detained. One thousand four hundred men, packed in tight rows in a barbed-wire compound under a blazing sun," were proselytized. The Camp Commander, Colonel Alan Knight, announced publicly that more than 600 of the Mau Mau men in the camp had been changed through MR.[27] Knight was a MR man and for two years working with a team from the United States, Switzerland and Denmark attempted—not unsuccessfully—to force resistance fighters to recant.[28]

MR was the brainchild of the U.S. national, Frank Buchman, though it was launched in London in May 1938 (then the United States a year later). He passed away in 1961 but by that point his hobbyhorse was a premier transnational, religious—and, most important: anticommunist—organization.[29] It was in 1936 that Buchman paid a visit to Germany, where he reputedly spoke highly of the extant leadership, including Himmler; he was also cited for his praise of Hitler. "I thank heaven for a man like Adolf Hitler," he reportedly declared, "who built a front-line of defense against the anti-Christ of Communism."[30]

He received critical support from the cream of U.S. political life—Henry Ford and Harry S. Truman—not to mention the future U.S. president, Richard M. Nixon, and Senator Karl Mundt of North Dakota, a pioneer in devising anti-communist legislation.[31] The slugging baseball star, Stan "The Man" Musial, was also a fan.[32]

Like moths to a light, MR was drawn to Kenya, as it seemed to contain a number of souls worth saving in a context where Communists were said to be advancing. It was in 1955 that this self proclaimed "Answer to Communism"[33] arrived in Nairobi to confer with Governor Evelyn Baring. "I met a small delegation from the Kenya Branch of the MRA Movement this morning," said the chief executive, who vaguely resembled the actor, John Barrymore. "I said to

them that the Government had not been discouraging to the movement." But as the governor saw it, this "visit by a large delegation of MRA in four American military aeroplanes at this moment was not well-timed," though "the members of the delegation did not welcome these views," he added dryly. "They are really aiming here at an appeal quite apart from any missions either Roman Catholic or Protestant," Sir Evelyn—the scion of a wealthy banking family—warned. "The visit of this mission is not at all welcome either to Archbishop Carey or to the Christian Council of Kenya. I thought, however," said the tactful politician, "it would be unwise to say this to them…"[34]

Even the powerful and affluent Governor had to tiptoe around the potent MR, particularly given their service to the regime in seeking to convert imprisoned freedom fighters at the Athi River camp. MR had brought a huge delegation to Kenya to inspect their handiwork.[35] MR was in tune with the emerging line of desegregation as well, as it included in its delegation, Charles Howard, the leading African American attorney.[36] At the same time, it did not turn its back on the apartheid regime, bringing C.B. Pearce of Johannesburg to their Mackinac Island headquarters.[37]

Buchman was an internationalist, maintaining a long-time friendship with Muhammad Ali Jinnah, Founding Father of Pakistan, who he first met in 1915. It was at Buchman's instigation that one of the largest Kikuyu meetings ever held—during the height of the insurgency—welcomed MR, a scant twenty-two miles from Nairobi. An estimated 7,000 Africans appeared to hear their message of God-fearing Christianity and resolute anticommunism. Some reputedly walked over 100 miles to get there. MR supporter, Peter Howard, who believed that his organization had "An Idea to Win the World," was effusive: "The Kikuyu covered the land like a multi-coloured blanket. They perched like massive fruit in all the trees. Their robes, plumes and decorations were a rainbow of colour. They carried spears and bows." The next day all assembled at the Athi River camp. There they heard Colonel Alan Knight, the commander, announce publicly that 600 of the insurgents had been changed through MR. Congressman Charles Deane, who hailed from the same North Carolina that gave birth to Ruark, was of the opinion that "the choice confronting the world today is Moral Rearmament or World Communism," and the gathering of Kikuyus suggested that momentum was in the direction of the former. He was happy to announce that he had won his most recent election—where African Americans were routinely barred from the polls—deploying MR principles. The delegation also included "Mrs. Bremer Hofmeyr," daughter of a leading settler; "Miss Mary Waruhiu…daughter of a Senior Chief of the Kikuyu who was murdered by the Mau Mau. Her brother, David Waruhiu," was on the staff of the "Athi River Mau Mau Rehabilitation Camp." Also part of this crew was "Miss Ann Wilkes," daughter of "William C. Wilkes, a partner of Kidder, Peabody on Wall Street…" While thousands gathered at the invitation of "Chief Waruhiu," "hundreds of thousands of Africans later heard the meeting by radio." As many saw it, the MR intervention marked a turning point in the attempt to reverse what seemed like the growing tide of insurgency.[38] Congressman Deane, on the other hand, left Kenya convinced of the potential black hatred for whites and convinced further of need for a change in Dixie.[39]

When Buchman died in 1961, his funeral in Allentown, Pennsylvania was well-attended. Nahashon Ngare, described as a "former Mau Mau leader" and sporting an "animal skin over his western suit," addressed the tearful throngs, blessing the now departed leader for all he had done allegedly for his homeland, according to one observer. Colonel Knight, who had commanded the camp where Ngare experienced his transformation also showed up. Over 1,200 attended with representatives from virtually every continent. Konrad Adenauer, the German Chancellor, sent a wreath.[40]

MR claimed to have influenced thousands upon thousands of Kenyans, including Kenyatta himself who sent his daughter to their headquarters. They claimed—probably not inaccurately—that the paramount leader collaborated with them, most likely a step away from his previous role as an apostle of the left to his future role as personification of neo-colonialism.[41] As things turned out, the moral rearming of the settler regime received courtesy of the United States may have been more important than any actual arms cache they received. For it was not long after MR became involved heavily in Kenya that the *New York Times* celebrated what it termed the demise of "Mau Mau." Exhaling nervously, it was claimed that "the worst of the terrorism was over by the middle of last year," that is, 1955, coincidentally with MR's arrival.[42]

In Kenya, religion may not have been the opiate of the masses but it did appear to be the amphetamines, speeding indigenes along the road to anticommunism, which ultimately served to undermine the insurgency against a devilish status quo. The Church Missionary Society set the tone. "The 'Beast' of Revelation," claimed one prelate, "may well be Communism and 'the sea' from which he rises may well be the present political disorder…" Instead of "Moral Rearmament" versus "World Communism" as the final conflict, he substituted Religion against the creed sprouting in Moscow. "The Bible teaches chastity and marital fidelity. The Communist wishes to undermine both these virtues," thus, it was said, "the Church should support the EA [East African] Governments in any firm measures it takes against Communism," including the "repression of strikes which have political not economic motives…"[43] Thus, when the settler regime was not opening the doors to MR, it was welcoming other religious formations, particularly from the United States since they were more likely to be in accord with the Church Missionary Society than the Communist Party. So embraced were the missions and missionaries of Jehovah's Witnesses,[44] which had shown over the years that they could appeal to African Americans. The Witnesses were perceived as conservative and, thus, could serve as a counterweight to the Roman Catholic Bishop of Kenya who traveled to Manhattan to inform those assembled at St. Francis of Assisi Church at 135 West 31st Street that the conflict in his homeland was "essentially a land question."[45]

Sir Anthony Swann, a supporter of the colony, acknowledged that the attitude of the religious authorities "varied enormously"; the "Italian Fathers, the Consulata Fathers were very good. And I have to say with regret—I don't know that I should say this—the people who were most sympathetic were the Irish Fathers to the Mau Mau. And they were the last to ever form a Home Guard of their missions," while the Church of Scotland was neutral.[46] W.H. Thompson, a Kenyan official,

had "four large European-run Mission Stations" in his jurisdiction, "plus many church units of varying sizes and influences in the hands of Kikuyu clergymen. Of those under direct European control, three were Roman Catholic with non-English speaking Italians in charge"; but the "Americans, kindly people all, were totally perplexed as all Americans are when it comes to anything connected with 'colonialism' and sat tight preserving that special somewhat smug image which only they have," whereas "the Presbyterians . . . became our great allies."[47]

Increasingly religious sentiment was being viewed as the antidote to radicalism, a perception that reached a crescendo in late 1955 when 3,000 students from 75 nations gathered at Athens, Ohio, for a "religious conference on 'Revolution and Reconciliation.'" President Eisenhower telegraphed congratulations and speaking was a Kenyan, Julius Gecau, a graduate student at the bastion of conservatism that the University of Chicago's Economics Department was rapidly becoming, though the *Times*' journalist covering this gathering seemed to be struck by his condemnation of "political domination by a small white minority."[48]

Selflessly volunteering to assist the regime was the newly minted religion known as Scientology. Writing from the "Hubbard Dianetic Center" on Hollywood's legendary Sunset Boulevard, A.E. van Vogt informed the regime, "if you have ever heard of dianetics, you probably know that it changed the picture of psychology in the United States in 1950 . . ." This was a few months after the declaration of the State of Emergency, so he knew he had an attentive audience: "permit me to suggest a dianetic solution to the Mau Mau problem, as follows," he said helpfully. "Take each oath of the Mau Mau and put it on a phonograph record in the native language. After each oath, record its opposite meaning, by the following pattern: 'Example: Where Mau Mau oath is, 'if I see anyone stealing anything from a European, I will say nothing, or this oath will kill me.' The direct opposite would be: 'if I see anyone stealing from a European, I will speak at once, and this oath will not kill me' . . ." Then "put copies of this record on sound trucks, and go through every village and back road of Mau Mau land, and do that day after day, covering each route many times. An initiate, who has heard the record, will have [the] opposite echoing through his head even as he repeats the oath itself. After hearing it many times, the Mau Mau will become bored with the once dread words, and presently they will joke about them . . . such patterns are easily broken. Should any special situation develop as a result of the use of the above method, please feel to write," he concluded accommodatingly.[49]

The settler regime was desperate but not despairingly beyond reason so it was unsympathetic to this overture. "I fear I know nothing of this subject," said one bureaucrat, "nor the success claimed for its methods in the United States but cannot see any useful application in the country of the proposals outlined."[50]

Scientology may have been rebuffed not only because of the apparent inadequacy of their techniques but also due to their place of origin. For though U.S. elites had bought—overwhelmingly—the line that the settlers were the last barrier preventing Moscow's encroachment in the region, there was still apprehension in London and Nairobi about the ultimate intentions of the North American power that was rapidly supplanting the Empire. London was not enthusiastic when a broadcasting entity from the United States sought to establish a network

of religious stations, beginning in Trinidad, site of the Empire's lucrative oil and gas interests.[51] They were even less eager when they sought to extend their interests to Kenya. "So far as we are concerned," said a British official, "we shall do nothing [to] implement the proposals" of the "American Protestant Mission."[52] Irked, the U.S. religious broadcaster asked pointedly why their " 'Bringing Christ to the Nations' programs were considered unsuitable for broadcasting in the Kenya colony…" They were "heard every week in over 49 countries" and had "always met enthusiastic response…"[53]

But London's dilemma was exposed when the authorities chose to embrace the visiting Louise Summa, though what recommended her—as a CBS official informed the BBC—was her post as "secretary and office manager for Freeman Gosden and Charles Correll," founders of the obnoxiously racist though fantastically popular program, *Amos 'n' Andy*. By feeding the Empire's racist impulse, Washington was able to insert itself into the crevices of the colony.[54]

An analogue of these religious elements was the Capricorn African Society (CAS), which arose at the time of the insurgency in Kenya as yet another cure for the alleged threat said to be posed by Communists. A leading CAS figure, David Stirling, was to be found frequently in the United States, often being feted by such pillars of the establishment as Bernard Baruch and Walter Hochschild, a major U.S. investor in African mines. According to his admiring biographer, "David had high hopes of the American connection, as it was proving difficult to raise funds for Capricorn in England."[55]

Yet the fact that a budding religion, Scientology, felt compelled to offer advice to a pressured and harassed settler regime in East Africa was indicative of a sea change occurring both in U.S. perceptions of Africa and Kenya itself. Though Washington was jousting with London and other European powers for influence in Africa, it still tended to transact official business with Africa through the not so good offices of the colonial powers.

In August 1954, just as the United States was coming to grips with the weighty import of the high court decision marking a step away from domestic apartheid, the U.S. ambassador in apartheid's homeland complained that "unfortunately we are not without a single full-time correspondent in South Africa of an American daily newspaper or… one of our news services. We had one of the former here last year during the election year," he said sarcastically and tellingly, "but right after the elections he went 'Mau Mau-ing' in Kenya."[56] Similarly, when the U.S. diplomat, Chester Bowles, began to prepare for a trip to Africa in 1955, he spent several days in Washington and to his stated "amazement we found only three people in the entire State Department working full time on African affairs" and when he "sought information on Kenya, we were referred to the United Kingdom" files at the "Congressional Library."[57] Two years later a survey discovered that only 1% of African Americans and scarcely 6% of Euro-Americans could name as many as five African nations.[58]

"Lyndon Johnson had no real interest in Africa," said his future Ambassador to Guinea of the man who was the powerhouse of the U.S. Senate in the 1950s.[59] On the other hand, Harry S. Truman, president at the time the State of Emergency was declared, was different—at least according to one who knew him well. The

economist, Willard Thorp, recalled that "there was once a proposal to bring more copper eastward to the ocean from Central Africa. The proposal involved building a railroad from [Mozambique] into Kenya." Thorp was happily pleased to discover that the U.S. president understood the geography outlined to him.[60]

One African nation that many in the United States did know was Kenya, which meant it absorbed disproportionately the burden of concern that weighed so heavily, most notably in the former Slave South where anxiety about antiracism and equality were near an all-time high. An indirect indication of a growing interest in Africa driven by stirrings against colonialism, symbolized by the abiding interest in "Mau Mau" was the visit to the continent of the popular journalist, John Gunther. Just as in the late twentieth century, a visit to a foreign port-of-call of a television news anchor from one of the major networks was a signal that something significant was afoot, when Gunther arrived in Africa as the conflict in Kenya was grabbing headlines, a sign was given that it was time to pay closer attention to the continent. For the well-connected Gunther was a chief interpreter of the world for U.S. elites. When the former Illinois governor, Adlai Stevenson, sought to travel to Nairobi with influential publisher, Cann Canfield and William Lloyd Garrison, scion of an important family, Gunther was able to contact the leading Kenyan figure, Sir Michael Blundell, to arrange their itinerary.[61] If Gunther's visit failed to convince the unaware about the growing importance of Kenya and Africa, surely the "See It Now" broadcast by famed television journalist, Edward R. Murrow—which featured Sir Michael Blundell from Nairobi and was trumpeted by Kenyan propagandists[62]—should have done the trick. If not that, then surely the fact that presidential hopeful, Adlai Stevenson, termed Sir Michael—who presided over a racist state—a "new breed of enlightened white," again to the delight of Nairobi myth-makers,[63] was suggestive.

"I liked Kenya better than any country we saw in Africa—politics apart," said Gunther; it was the "jewel in the imperial crown" with a "magical combination of a tropical climate and a piercing altitude," a "taut, unruly slightly crazy country," a "place in the sun for shady people." "I have never met people so trigger-happy as in Kenya," he continued, as "ladies of gentle breeding, in diaphanous evening dress, carried revolvers in their gold mesh bags, which clanked ominously when they were dropped casually on coffee tables." It was not just the women either as he espied a "youth who looked as if he had just come off a cricket field" but "said with cold, sinister pride that he shot and killed five Africans so far, and hoped that there would be more to come." Then there was the moral brackishness that such bloodthirstiness enabled. For Nairobi, "more than any city in Africa (except possibly Tangier) attracted the corrupt rich…" But corrupt or not settlers were nervous, as suggested when at Government House Lady Mary Baring, spouse of the Governor, "politely steered the conversation into French whenever it became politically interesting because servants who knew English might understand what was being said." Already "some Mau Mau suspects had been found" at the highest level. Gunther assayed that "Mau Mau" by dint of "their organization, provide[d] a perfect field for large-scale Communist infiltration into Kenya, if that should ever come. The cell structure is already there." Similarly, he was startled when before his departure from Manhattan "Negro friends told me to watch

out for an incipient terrorist movement known as Mau Mau, which was 'a kind of black Ku-Klux-Klan.' "

Gunther also captured why the settlers' cause had struck a chord in the United States for the most resolute regime supporters invoked the "Boston Tea Party," that is ousting London "as George Washington did" and declaring independence. But he also received a glimpse as to why some continued to resent his country: "I heard remarks like 'you lost our Empire for us, because of your dollar pressure!' "[64]

Perhaps because of inclusion of raw sentiments like these, one British official told Gunther "you have done a grand job."[65] This was a reflection of the reality that although the authorities thought they had the resistance under control, it did not require a seer to recognize that the long-term prospects for the settler regime were not bright and an honest presentation might preclude the more recalcitrant among them from pursuing a "Boston Tea Party" and independence. For example, the extremist Kenya Empire Party, led by Leo Vigar, advocated an unashamed white supremacy and, according to one analyst, had "the active backing of a large number of settlers," claiming 2000 members. Vigar declared audaciously that his party would seize political control by force of arms if London persisted in its alleged aim of furthering African and Asian political development. As a last resort, he said, he would invite Pretoria to dispatch troops to Kenya and hinted that the apartheid authorities had already made such an offer. There was a continuing fear that settlers would have foreshadowed what their counterparts in Southern Rhodesia did in November 1965—promulgating a Unilateral Declaration of Independence (UDI).[66]

Thus in 1955 Salisbury rushed through legislation to bar what were called "Mau Mau oath-bound societies," just as those who engineered UDI were, like those similarly situated in Nairobi—according to one scholar—"generally drawn to the United States as the leading Western power, now that Britain was manifestly in decline and were particularly attracted to the ideology of the American radical right…"[67] Strikingly, in Algeria the colonists developed plans—termed the "American Solution"—to remove indigenes wholesale to reservations, just as in the nineteenth century, Napoleon III reputedly declared that if the French continued to confiscate land, "it would be necessary to drive the Arab population back into the desert and inflict upon it the fate of the Indians of North America."[68]

The Labour Party stalwart, Richard Crossman, was struck during his visit to Nairobi at the height of the State of Emergency, that this was a war not only about the fate of Kenya but, as well, a war about the fate of white supremacy, which seemed to be about to wither in Washington. "In successive waves," said Crossman, "since Lloyd George's 1910 budget they came to Kenya in protest against the decadence of the Old Country, which was mollycoddling its workers"—this they would not do in Nairobi. For here "they hoped to lead a free, pioneering life, untrammeled by Socialist taxation, labour restrictions and high wages"[69]—or antiracism, for that matter. "Had they had their way," says the celebrated paleontologist, Richard Leakey, "the settlers" of Kenya "would have established an apartheid system like the South African whites did, but the British government did not allow this…"[70]

Some in London may have been pleased with Gunther's realization that "even an American in Kenya is a European"—meaning Euro-American—which was an indirect way of papering over Anglo-American tensions. Settlers may have been heartened by his revelation that "very few Europeans . . . have been killed by the Mau Mau," which was singularly true despite the hype—though their knees may have buckled at his conclusion that "many of those [who] did meet death were murdered by their own servants or by Africans in whom they had complete trust . . ."[71] Even Gunther's point that "it isn't land that's at [the] heart of [the] Kikuyu problem but [the] color-bar,"[72] could have provided fond hope that the conflict could be settled—U.S. style—without wealth redistribution but simply lifting discriminatory barriers.

Gunther's book was launched as the ongoing struggle for Negro rights reached dizzying new heights with stunning high court decisions and transforming mass action as symbolized by the bus boycott in Montgomery, Alabama. Concern about the retreat of white supremacy in Africa melded in some minds with what was occurring in the former Slave South. "British Africa below the equator is the last scene in the panoramic drama of the spreading out of Europe into the empty places of the world," argued the *Times* in late 1954, when actually what was occurring was the last scene in the retreat of colonialism from sites that were far from empty.[73]

These contrasting narratives were a reflection of an actual war that was unwinding in Africa at that moment, with Kenya as a major site of contestation. The Institute of World Affairs in Manhattan, discovered that when one of its correspondents spent eighteen months in the region. As a new year dawned in 1955 he was huddled apprehensively in Nairobi's Norfolk Hotel. "The roar of bombers is heard every few days as they take off to pay their respects to the Mau Mau gangs" and "quick burps of Sten guns sometimes interrupt the serene choruses of the swamp crickets." Then, "from Nyeri," he "tramped around one time for three blisterous [*sic*] days in the Aberdare bamboo forests with an army patrol hunting a Mau Mau gang . . . I spent a number of tense evenings on isolated settler farms, one time muttering Christmas carols within reach of a .45 [caliber weapon]."[74]

This image of a Euro-American stubbornly seeking to hold what may have been an indefensible position was a metaphor for this group's general reaction to the "winds of change" blowing from Nairobi to North Carolina. Would they be blasted out of these eminently pregnable positions, would they retreat, would they surrender, would they fight on?

Nairobi was being forced to report on and justify policies which theretofore had seemed to be divinely ordained. Yes, it was said wearily and authoritatively, the "Kenya Regiment" or "Territorial Force" "restricts the membership" to "British subjects of European race or origin. It is correct that Asians and Africans are discriminated against to the extent that they cannot join the Regiment"—was Nairobi expected to place weapons willingly into the hands of indigenes? And, yes, "the detention camp system is confined to Africans" and "no change is recommended."[75] The governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, found himself having to justify racial segregation to London,[76] while the Foreign Office in Britain found itself having to rationalize to a skeptical Addis Ababa residential segregation

"at present applied to the various Kenyan races and also to Arabs, Somalis, Ethiopians, Malagasies and Comoro islanders and also the racial discrimination applied to such peoples in relation to beverages," meaning alcohol. Since Kenya was allegedly being developed as a "multi-racial state," London had raised the ticklish matter of whether Nairobi would "take steps" to abolish these noxious "regulations."[77]

Options were narrowing speedily, a reality that dawned when a large group of emerging African and Asian nations met in Bandung, Indonesia in late 1955, which made clear its unfiltered distaste for the kind of white supremacy that then obtained from Mombasa to Mississippi. The communiqué that was issued in Bandung, "deplored the policies and practices of racial segregation and discrimination which forms the basis of government and human relations in large regions of Africa and in other parts of the world"[78]—including North America. That India played a pivotal role in this gathering was disconcerting to Nairobi and Washington, given their persistent fears about both its ongoing ties to Moscow and its abject hostility to apartheid policies. But here India was joined by China, whose suave and elegant premier, Chou En-Lai denounced "colonial plunder and oppression" in Africa—settler regimes and the African Slave Trade being among these—as he provided a harbinger of the crisis soon to come: Suez.[79]

A CIA emissary present in Bandung was not impressed—or, perhaps, his remarks may have reflected anxiety about this landmark gathering. It was a "darktown strutter's ball,"[80] he huffed, tossing an insult usually aimed at Negro confabs, while betraying the reality that their putative Indian and Chinese allies would be more difficult to subdue. This agent may have been distracted by the presence in Indonesia of Harlem congressman, Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. Vainly he had sought to meet with President Eisenhower—who he was to bizarrely endorse in 1956 for reelection, perhaps spurred by a tax investigation—but the duffer-in-chief would not budge. "The President's attitude is that he must first see you," Secretary of State Dulles was told, "then he would talk with you re: his seeing him." Again, the White House was running up against the new etiquette of race relations, that is, Eisenhower had "never refused to see a Congressman or Senator," so how could they justifiably deny Harlem's man? Nonplussed, Powell was demoted as he was instructed to "first to talk with State," then Dulles would "be away" and he would be ignored altogether.[81] For as Dulles saw it from his "standpoint [Powell] had been very critical and should not come in to see the Pres[ident]."[82]

Despite this rebuff, Powell traveled thousands of miles to Bandung to exonerate his government, then under fire for acquiescing to racist policies from Kentucky to Kenya. Richard Wright, the leading African American novelist, who too found it imperative to attend this vital gathering, disputed his compatriot asserting that Powell "gave us Americans a cleaner bill of health than we deserve," though the eminent writer declared that the "Negro problem in the United States" was "child's play compared to the naked racial tensions gripping Asia and Africa," notably Kenya.[83] But in fact, as Wright knew better than most, the two problems were linked. Even Powell—who was aware that Bandung "held particular resonance for American blacks"[84]—acknowledged that Washington

came under withering assault by the planet's sovereign majority because of its domestic and its global policies that were marinating in the bile of racism.[85] It was Powell, in any event, who was a virtual lone voice in the U.S. Congress that as early as mid-1953 urged Washington to cut aid to Nairobi and demanded that the United Nations intervene in the wake of "massacres" of indigenes.[86] So prompted, one of his Harlem constituents, James Lawson, also demanded that the UN address the "Kenya Question."[87]

Yet, neither Wright nor Powell seemed to recognize that Bandung may have marked the point when Washington recognized that a retreat from the more egregious aspects of white supremacy was unavoidable. Of course, like an army on the battlefield, it retreated—then dug in not far from its previous position so as to better defend the imagined and real gains from white supremacy over the decades and centuries. Ironically, this was occurring as their comrades in Kenya were declaring victory over the insurgency. As it turned out, this declaration of mission accomplished was wildly premature.

For the strains that had been apparent in the much heralded Anglo-American alliance were to be pushed to the breaking point by the matter that the Chinese authorities had raised almost off-handedly at Bandung: Suez. And this was to prove decisive in compelling the once mighty Empire to seek the protective favor of its former North American colony—which was being compelled to retreat from the kind of white supremacy that had been Nairobi's stock-in-trade. A harbinger of those tensions had arisen as a result of Bandung when a British bureaucrat railed at the "facile habit which the Americans have now adopted of bracketing together European colonial rule and Communist domination of neighbouring countries," which was "likely to throw a very mixed blessing from our point of view." Aghast at it all, he was wondrous at "acceptance of the idea that 'colonialism' is something evil" and perturbed that "it makes it more difficult for us to show that, consciously or unconsciously, the rabid anticolonials are playing the Communist game by helping to create conditions of instability…" With a sigh of resignation, he concluded, "Bandung is likely to make our task more difficult."[88]

II

"Mau Mau"—to Little Rock

From time to time, the U.S. consul in Nairobi left the charms of this inland metropolis and traveled to the countryside. Thus it was that in the late Summer of 1949 he was visiting Marsabit, about 560 kilometers from Nairobi. There he encountered an African by the name of "Masindi," who—said Edward Groth—"headed a group of radical Africans with strong anti-European inclinations, which because of the activities of its members had to be abolished." Arson was their specialty, which was conducted "under a religious guise." When he met the leader of this apparent precursor to "Mau Mau," Masindi "wanted to know whether I was an Englishman or an American and when he learned that I was the latter he smiled broadly and said, 'the Americans are great people.' He kept repeating this…"[1]

Perhaps Masindi did not read newspapers carefully or perhaps he was unduly courteous. Actually he was reflecting the fact that the renowned Anglo-American alliance was more brittle than it appeared. Perhaps Masindi would not have been overly surprised by the fissures that erupted between London and Washington in 1956 in the wake of the disastrous British-French-Israeli attack on Egypt in an act of brigandage that is now known as the "Suez Crisis." Washington's opposition to this banditry had a catalytic impact on the international situation that eventually was to have moment for Kenya: Paris perceived a hollowness at the heart of the now tarnished North Atlantic alliance and proceeded to strike out on a path that was even more independent, while London took the opposite tack, acknowledging that the game was up when it came to the Empire: it had been a great run but now was the time to bow to the inevitable—and Washington. Since the United States was being forced into a retreat of its own, compelled to discard its odious Jim Crow, this left the settler regime in Nairobi in the lurch: forced to bow to the inevitable.

The Suez Crisis, in short, was a defining event of the twentieth century. Israeli independence and the concomitant efflorescence of Arab radicalism in Egypt, increasing Soviet interest in the region—all this heightened Washington's sensitivity to the strategic value of the Suez Canal and the Straits of Bab el-Mandeb.[2] It provided Washington further incentive to deepen its already blossoming relationship with Addis Ababa, which was bad news for the settler regime. By 1960

there were a stunning 5,000 U.S. nationals in the vital base in Eritrea—far more than any other African nation.[3]

President Eisenhower felt that Winston Churchill was still unrealistically basking in the past glories of the Empire: After a meeting between the two months after the proclamation of the State of Emergency, Eisenhower adopted the pose of scolding parent, chiding his British counterpart. The U.S. president should not have been so unkind for London's Empire was crumbling and it knew that it could only carve out a future role in "punching above its weight" in alliance with Washington. While Eisenhower metaphorically patted Churchill on his bald pate, his secretary of state, John Dulles and the Foreign Minister, Anthony Eden, were at each other's jugular in an expression of intense dislike that too mirrored the relationship between the two nations they represented. For it was Washington that pressed London to withdraw from Egypt in 1956 after its catastrophic intervention.[4]

Dean Acheson, former U.S. secretary of state,[5] tried to be more charitable. "Our coalition was brought to the verge of destruction," he said with sobriety "and may well have been permanently damaged…" Since it did not have a colonial empire to protect—and had an interest in upsetting a status quo that provided privilege to these powers—Washington could pull down the temple without fretting about the impact regionally unlike France (Algeria) or Britain (Kenya). When Moscow intervened contemporaneously in Hungary, there was fear this maneuver would shrink in gravity due to Suez, which further infuriated staunch anticommunists.[6] Moscow further complicated matters by threatening that its forces would join the battle in Egypt and rockets would bombard Britain and France. "In what situation would Britain find herself," was the provocative query posed by Soviet leader N.A. Bulganin to Anthony Eden, "if she were attacked by stronger states, possessing all types of modern destructive weapons?"[7] In some ways, Washington gave London and Paris and their ill-gotten colonial empires an extended lease on life by forcing them to back down in Egypt.

Suez was profoundly transformative. It enhanced Moscow's influence, which mandated a severe adjustment by advocates of the status quo. London was furious that Cairo was broadcasting regularly into Kenya calling for a renewal of the revolt against colonialism and its extension throughout the continent until the invaders had been expelled.[8] These broadcasts, it was reported, were inciting Africans in articulate Swahili to "cut the throats of the 'white dogs'." Growing numbers of Africans were tuning in: "small crowds sometimes gather outside shops in trading centres," as one colonial journal reported uneasily.[9] Naturally, Kenya propagandists expressed concern about the reach of Egyptian radio.[10]

So moved, the BBC urgently dispatched a delegation to the region and it was not pleased with what it ascertained. Traveling to the entirety of British East Africa, Southern Rhodesia, Nyasaland and Aden, they were startled by what they found. There had been monitoring in Mombasa since 1953 of broadcasts from Moscow and Peking, not to mention "All Indian Radio in Swahili and the Voice

of the Arabs in Arabic" from Cairo. In Uganda "Peking English . . . and Tashkent English" were "audible in "domestic receivers."[11] By 1960 broadcasts from Moscow in Swahili were reaching Kenya—the accents indicated that the two announcers were "from Central Province" and "from Nyanza," which was hardly reassuring.[12] What to do? The BBC took the route that any burdened colonizer would: there was a plan for "increasing the monitoring of Arabic and African language broadcasts" by asking "what the Americans are doing or intend to do," that is, "getting the Americans to increase [their] effort."[13] But with the mass production of transistor radios in Japan, this was a problem for Kenya—its policy of compelled illiteracy had been quite successful, though radio neatly sliced this Gordian Knot.

These Cairo broadcasts seemed to increase after the Suez debacle. This was not what the settlers sought to hear. Many settlers were unsettled by this thrust from Cairo, which impelled London to bolster Nairobi as an imperial base[14] : this raised the specter of brigades of armed Africans in their midst.[15] Similarly, prior to Suez, London still thought it could paternalistically engage in "education of Americans,"[16] after Suez this very notion seemed ridiculous[17]—as the Empire had been ousted from India, bloodied in Malaya, while its tasty morsel in Hong Kong was being eyed hungrily by Chinese Communists. Then Sudan, followed by Ghana began to pull away from the Union Jack, raising the possibility that—like Egypt—they too could render assistance to anticolonial forces in Kenya. At a certain point London had to contemplate seriously the value of maintaining control of "British East Africa" given their rapidly shrinking imperial dreams. That Washington was breathing down the neck of the Empire, destabilizing its Suez adventure, had to make London reconsider the totality of its global commitments.

Peering across the channel, London could take notice of Paris' view that Washington was actually favoring the rebels in Algeria.[18] The youthful Senator from Massachusetts, John F. Kennedy, was catapulted in the public eye when he took the then contrarian view that "Algeria is no longer a problem for the French alone" and "nor will it ever be again . . ." Paris was beyond fury in the face of these remarks. Their leading official in Algiers responded stiffly and pointedly, that Paris was "no more ready to give up Algeria than the Northern states were ready to give up the Southern states during the Civil War." Another stated stingingly to Washington, "Why don't you take care of your Negroes instead of worrying about our Moslems."[19] When the visiting U.S. writer, Martha Gellhorn, arrived in Chad in the early 1960s, she noticed that "the Americans do not mix with the French," since "there is bad blood" in this African nation where Parisian influence remained strong.[20] In Senegal, equally suffused with French influence, the U.S. official, David Doyle, found at the same time that "the French peddled rumors that the U.S. Peace Corps was a CIA tool," as Paris was openly "unfriendly to U.S. interests in Africa . . ."[21] London wasn't alone in being pressed by Washington.

But from Washington's standpoint, somebody had to be concerned about the overall strength of the North Atlantic community in the face of the new

spirit of Bandung, which in light of Suez had gained added momentum with Moscow threatening to rain rockets on London. Parochial colonial interests had to yield, particularly since it was evident that neither London nor Paris were up to the challenge they both faced. Already Nairobi had noticed that even before the Suez disaster, the international press had begun to make a "comparison of Mau Mau to events in northern Africa."[22] How long would it take for the United States to smile upon Kenyan rebels not as tainted in the public eye as "Mau Mau?"

Certainly relations between London and Washington were not ideal in the aftermath of the Suez fiasco, which did not augur well for the colony in Kenya. Robert Ruark, a principal interpreter of African realities for Euro-Americans, was bitter about the Empire: "it took the armed might of Britain four years to whip a handful of screaming savages in Kenya," he declaimed, then it was beaten handily in Egypt. Evidently Nairobi was also displeased with its ostensible colonial master since it reprinted Ruark's tirade and noted prominently that it had been "syndicated in 13 newspapers" in the United States.[23] Firing back on behalf of the Empire, Christopher Wilson asked how could Washington credibly complain about colonialism, given its possession of the Panama Canal Zone, though he tumbled quickly from the high moral ground he thought he was reaching when he let slip the remark, "there is nothing shameful in saying that Africans do not like work."[24]

Scrambling to stanch the bleeding, London then floated an idea to enhance Kenya's role by bypassing the Suez Canal and having oil tankers from the Gulf discharge at Mombasa, then building a pipeline to Portuguese West Africa, then shipping the product to the North Atlantic powers.[25] But this ambitious plan could hardly be implemented by an overstretched Empire alone and would not take flight unless Washington signed on—but why should the United States back a project in the jurisdiction of a power whose future seemed decidedly shaky? In any case, London was ambivalent at best about digging its own grave. Simultaneously, Foggy Bottom groused "that prospective investors have been discouraged by the number and variety of obstacles that have been imposed upon them"[26] in Kenya.

Thus, even as "Mau Mau" was being crushed, U.S. officials in Nairobi were expressing reservations about the future of the colony: Though the alleged "bestial practices of the Mau Mau" should "help the British," Washington should recognize that "British power is definitely on the wane here" and "America must not forever remain an unknown quantity to these people"; in fact, it was "imperative," it was stressed "to get *closer* to the indigenous population."[27] [emphasis-original] But there were obvious barriers to getting closer to the majority. Yet, it was reported, "it appears that the British are somewhat sensitive on the subject of the degree and scope" of U.S. "activity" in the region.[28] U.S. imperialism was much too capacious to be contained by simple sensitivity of erstwhile allies. Judd Polk, who visited Kenya as part a study of the sterling area, foresaw a "great future" for a region, which most definitely included his own United States in the equation.[29] "Recent talks between Kenya officials and American businessmen have stimulated American interest," according to settler regime officials; they

were citing a senior executive at the Caterpillar Tractor Co., who arrived in the region to visit the "new Nairobi airport at Embakasi and the dam at Sasamua, where Caterpillar units are working."[30]

It was at that juncture—driven by the interwoven issues of Little Rock and Ghana, Suez and Bandung—that the authoritative Rockefeller Brothers Fund chose to take a new look at Washington's policy in the region so that the United States might take advantage of a rapidly changing landscape. "Our broad interests are keeping Soviet power out of the region," was the general conclusion drawn. Analogized was how "in the face of this German threat, the British moved to consolidate their hold on the source of the Nile in Uganda" in the nineteenth century—now picking up the burden of Empire, Washington had to respond accordingly in the twentieth. Yet, it was added gloomily, U.S. problems regionally, "derive essentially from the colonial status of these territories and the inability of the United States to have direct diplomatic channels through which approaches may be made. The pursuit of American interests is dependent on the cooperation and willingness of Great Britain to accept our viewpoint. Though the long-term interests of both the United States and Great Britain appear to be compatible," it was said uncertainly, "important areas of disagreement appear to be inherent in the short run…" Therefore, in addition to blocking Moscow, Washington should open second and third fronts by seeking to "demonstrate a visible degree of independence from that of the colonial powers and the African-Asian bloc…"[31]

The walls were closing in on the Empire in the aftermath of the Suez catastrophe. The prime minister was informed in early 1957 that due to "our anxieties concerning" the Suez Canal, London now had to worry further about "the supply of oil," which made them more interested in the "Texas oil situation."[32] When London seemed to be falling under the spell of Texans, oilmen at that[33]—the most jingoistic, expansionist, and retrograde sector of the nation and the ruling elite as a whole—it was apparent that the days of the Empire's further existence were diminishing dramatically. "One of the difficulties," the prime minister was told, "is that the people who control Texas [oil] are an independent private body to whom the American Government cannot give direction."[34] The "Minister of Fuel and Power said that he had originally estimated that, with the aid of supplies from the United States, we could rely on receiving some 75 per cent of our normal requirements of oil."[35] Would London freeze in the dark as a result of the Suez humiliation and resultant increased leverage in Texas?

With "Mau Mau," then Bandung, followed by Suez, whatever dam of indifference blocking comprehension of the stakes in Kenya and Africa alike had been breached. What swiftly followed was a growing recognition that colonialism was doomed, a new day was arriving and the status quo was untenable. Unfortunately, it was at that propitious moment that the CAA, which had done so much to bring the United States to this turning point liquidated. Present in a grim meeting were the warhorses of yore, including Paul and Eslanda Robeson and W. Alphaeus Hunton. With sobriety they "traced the rapid growth of American interest in Africa since 1952 as reflected in the popular and scholarly journals and books." It was in view of this changed situation that it was

found that the "Council was no longer needed to stimulate American interests in Africa." Yes, "continuing Government harassment of the organization made it difficult if not impossible for it to function." "Dissolution" was seen as the only alternative.[36]

Why the Council would choose this evident optimistic time to go out of business was reflected when contemporaneously, the indefatigable St. Clair Drake continued his ongoing campaign to prevent the deportation of R. Mugo Gatheru. Once more, he sought to distance himself and his client from the presumed taint carried by the Robesons, Du Bois and CAA: "As a follower of George Padmore's philosophy," began the scholar seeking to cloak himself in the finery of the Pan-Africanist's turn toward anticommunism, "I agree with him completely when he takes the position that it is sheer political asininity and irresponsibility for African national movements to associate with or affiliate with the International Communist Movement." This, stressed the hirsute academic, is "*my* position." As he saw it—without elaboration—"the problems of Korea, Malaya and Indochina are different from the problems of Africa."[37]

Thus, the African American solidarity movement with Kenya and Africa, which had persevered so valiantly at a time when Washington was either indifferent or actively collaborated with the colonialists, limped into the bright new era brought by Bandung and Suez when it should have been striding confidently. For at the same time the hated Jim Crow regime, which had been thought to be well-nigh eternal, was melting like a snowball in a Congo summer and voting rights awaited that would provide added strength.

Of course, unavoidably there appeared to be a spike in interest in Kenya given the profoundly altered global correlation of forces brought by Bandung, then Suez. Carl Rowan, the leading African American journalist and soon to be an Ambassador to Finland, arrived in Nairobi on a jaunt noted by Kenyan propagandists,[38] as did William Worthy who toiled on behalf of a black newspaper chain based in Baltimore.[39] Nairobi took notice when another black organ, the *Pittsburgh Courier*, reported on how "[Dedan] Kimathi was captured and subsequently hanged. A picture of him on the stretcher accompanied the report…"[40] Also noticed by Nairobi was yet another report from this specialized press that inflamed Harlem, this time the *New York Amsterdam News* recounted a story about an African prisoner who was kicked headfirst into a cauldron of boiling water by a European prison guard who considered it to be excellent humor.[41] Nairobi could not have been pleased when Worthy's *Baltimore Afro-American* noted bitterly that "Mau Maus have single-handedly sought to oust British oppressors without the aid of world opinion which helped the Hungarians in their fight against Russia…"[42]

But the compelled liquidation of the Council on African Affairs meant that African Americans were not ideally positioned to take advantage of the dramatically altered relation of forces that accompanied "Mau Mau," Bandung, Suez, and the impending independence of Sudan and Ghana—which was the point of throwing the CAA overboard. Thus, after these mega-shocks, Washington was then faced by the stunning confrontation involving the dissolution of

racist laws mandating separate schools in Little Rock, Arkansas. Appropriately, Washington received a black-eye when white mobs rioted and armed troops had to be summoned to patrol the hallways of schools. How could Washington paint itself as the paragon of human rights virtue—and portray Moscow as the exact opposite—given such an outrage? How could "Masindi" or any Kenyan indigene think favorably of the United States given how people who resembled him were being treated in Arkansas? This controversy, according to one informed analysis, "received more attention" in Kenya "than developments in Ghana, Malayan independence or the United Nations debates on Hungary." In Uganda, political parties used Little Rock to compete for the title of sole Kampala champions of American Negro rights in order to draw voters and to increase their political clout.[43] From Dar es Salaam, the Founding Father of the state that was to become Tanzania, was equally up in arms. "Why do we get so annoyed when we hear of a Little Rock in America?" asked Julius Nyerere rhetorically.[44]

Little Rock was a burden weighing heavily on the mind of Secretary of State Dulles when he engaged in an agonized telephone call with Attorney General Herbert Brownell in the early afternoon of September 24, 1957. It was "ruining our foreign policy," moaned Dulles. "The effect of this in Asia and Africa," he complained "will be worse for us than Hungary was for the Russians…" Concern was raised as to how "Nasser and Khrushchev were making" hay out of this crisis: "the President was very alert to this aspect," it was said somberly. Yet the "continued opposition from Southern Governors," dug in to a trench of opposition to desegregation limited room for maneuver. "They discussed the situation at some length"—as well they should have.[45]

Despite this setback—as the Southern governors amply demonstrated—there remained powerful forces in the United States who were locked into increasingly outmoded views about African Americans and, importantly, Africans. Thus, not dissuaded by its travails in filming *Mogambo* or the less than congratulatory acclaim that greeted *Something of Value*, Hollywood turned its unsteady camera again on Kenya. Stewart Granger was slated to star in *White Hunter*. Cornel and Jean Wilde were scheduled for a star turn in *Marabee of the Black Coast*, while John Wayne and a returning Ava Gardner were reported to appear in *Rain in Kenya*.[46] Hollywood's sweetheart, Donna Reed was spotted in Malindi, perhaps scouting locations,[47] while *Simba* was reviewed widely.[48] Victor Mature, described by one settler as "overripe and far from intrepid" arrived in Buffalo Springs, Kenya to "star with too perfect Janet Leigh," in a pseudo safari film called *Udongo*.[49] In mid-1954 the colonial authorities accompanied the carrot-topped comic, Danny Kaye, as he visited the "Kiambu reserve" and "took a film of a Kikuyu guard. During his visit they showed him a patrol bringing in a terrorist," but he evinced no concern about it all.[50] So inspired, a slim twenty-two-year-old Masai man named Kipanga—a former bus driver—became Kenyan propagandists' "top comedian" as he "parodied the Mau Mau oath in a sketch": they termed him the "Africans' 'Danny Kaye' who fights Mau Mau with laughter…"[51] Hollywood's

increased interest in Kenya seemed to portend Washington's impending ouster of London from the region.

Even when London sought to get in on the act, the newly formed Phoenix Productions Ltd. based in Britain chose to be staffed and directed by U.S. nationals, perhaps because of the high level of capitalization required.[52] Not surprisingly, given this tidal wave of stars descending on Kenya, Nairobi was elated to announce during this period that the colony "experienced a good press in the United States" with not only the foregoing but also a "coloured film, 'Mau Mau'," a documentary "filmed in Kenya by Charles Trotter" that was "released in the U.S. and widely publicized"[53]—it was not exactly favorable to the anticolonial resistance.

Given the hordes of film crews and the resultant droves of gossip columnists, paparazzi and the like, Hollywood found it needed handlers, minders, interpreters, which were all welcome in Nairobi—along with their hard currency. This created a window of opportunity for the noted paleontologist, Louis Leakey, who earlier had been accused of professional jealousy by Ralph Bunche. By the time of the State of Emergency, Leakey, a colonial patriot, was working as an officer with those tracking the resistance. Given his knowledge of the Kikuyu, he was taken seriously when he portrayed the "Mau Mau" as—his biographer put it—"savage, anti-white and anti-Christian," that is, "precisely the image the colonial government wished to convey"—a belief witnessed by more than one startled newcomer to Kenya who witnessed "Louis' secretary with a 'large revolver strapped around her middle'." Then Leakey and his spouse began strapping on side arms, a "fashion that came to be known as 'European National Dress.' " Though he was supposedly just an interpreter, he was actually part of the prosecution team that convicted and imprisoned Kenyatta to the point where counsel for the resistance leader demanded that he be dismissed.[54]

With his knowledge of indigenes and his close ties to the regime, Leakey was able to profit handsomely as a middle-man when Hollywood arrived in Nairobi. Initially, the portly paleontologist demurred.[55] But U.S. dollars were difficult to reject, so Leakey accepted the proffered funds and requested the "the script of the film for me to vet." He provided detail for the production,[56] amidst his complaints about too paltry payments. Still, Leakey continued providing counsel[57]—and continued engaging in the transformative search for fossils that altered the way humankind was conceived,[58] while continuing to haggle over more dollars and a subsidized trip to Hollywood—amid more persnickety complaints about how indigenes were to be portrayed on the silver screen and knowing disclaimers about his work on previous productions.[59] Repeatedly, he angled for more compensation—"does the American Income Tax Department deduct any part of the fee you pay me"—while maneuvering for more exposure: "would there be any prospect of my being able, at the conclusion of my work with you, of getting, say, one television and/or broadcast contract in New York?"[60] All the while, he was backed avidly by his Nairobi superiors.[61]

Thus, Leakey was able to profit bountifully from Hollywood's renewed interest in Africa, which in a real sense was to signal a renewed interest in Kenya. During this period, Leakey also became a source of information for

those adventurous professors in the United States who sought to introduce more content on Africa into their curricula,[62] becoming chummy with some of them in the process—which was not inimical to Nairobi's agenda.[63] It was in that context that the Ford Foundation, a philanthropy whose interests were global, turned its alert eyes to the region. By early 1955, London perceived an "increased interest in African affairs" by "American universities and foundations (in particular the Ford Foundation)."[64] Signs were already apparent that London was overcommitted and would have to retreat somewhat from the global stage, which could leave a vacuum—it was thought—that Moscow would then fill. Arriving in late 1956 after a less than commodious seven hour flight from Leopoldville in the Congo, John Howard stopped first in Uganda where the governor, Andrew Cohen, informed him that freedom—by which he meant "self-government and not independence"—was "fifteen years" away.[65] This was not what Washington, which was eager to elbow London aside, wanted to hear.[66]

But even in Uganda, echoes of their neighbor's strife was felt, which gave more urgency to an impulse in the United States to resolve this crisis by ousting London if need be. This came clear at a soccer or football match between teams from Uganda and Kenya, held at a stadium in Kampala. Uganda won this battle of the bare-footed, 3–2, as a crowd, many of whom were equally shoeless cheered avidly; 20,000 were present with an equal amount outside the stadium straining to enter. Others were clinging to rooftops as far as the eye could see, seeking—vainly—to get a peek of what was for many an infrequent diversion in otherwise dreary lives. "During the course of play," as Howard recounted it, "when a Kenya man was being a bit rough on a Uganda player, one of the strongly pro-Uganda audience called out 'Mau Mau,'" signaling a new way of viewing toughness and a confrontational style that had spread beyond the confines of Kenya even as the authorities were claiming the resistance had died.[67]

But whatever clarity about the resistance he had gleaned was challenged once he arrived in Nairobi. There he met with Dorothy Hughes, a member of the Legislative Council, and came to recognize that it would not be easy for Washington, even if it managed the feat of ousting London for the settler class was obdurately stubborn in its racist intractability and had a mirror image in the former Slave South besides to bolster it if the need arose. She "made the rather extreme statement," said a disgusted Howard, "that the whole basis of Mau Mau was the jealousy of the primitive African women for their better educated husbands"—not land hunger, not apartheid, not cruel exploitation. He managed to meet the governor, Sir Evelyn Baring, a number of times and could not help but notice that amidst the hovels and slums that housed indigenes, this wealthy man—who "had spent ten years in the Union of South Africa, two years in Rhodesia and four years in Kenya"—was residing in "the most sumptuous" residence "we have yet seen…"

Yet the alert Howard also noticed that there were obvious inroads available to the United States. Sir Evelyn confessed that "the Mau Mau problem" had "cost a good deal of money. The United Kingdom had loaned Kenya fourteen

million pounds in one year. This had dropped to four million pounds and it was doubtful that Kenya could ever repay the loan." In short, Kenya was "badly in need of money at the present time… unfortunately at a time when the [United Kingdom] itself [was] having to retrench." Almost boastfully, Sir Evelyn admitted that "the Mau Mau resistance was broken" when Nairobi "the center of Mau Mau activity was cleared of Kikuyu people and the people sent to concentration camps…" The problem was that the Kikuyus were "the best railway workers, the best farm workers and are the only forest workers," and, besides, "provide most of the artisans in Kenya as well as the best students in Makerere," the regional university in Uganda. In other words, the settler regime had to strangle the patient in order to save it, for clamping down on the Kikuyu in the context of a retrenchment by London, wounded the Kenyan economy grievously. Potentially, this could provide an opening for Washington to move in decisively but this would not be easy given the U.S. official turn toward desegregation: Sir Evelyn in contrast did "not believe that interracial schools are ready for adoption by the country…"[68]

Sir Evelyn revealed the dilemma faced by Washington: the settlers simply did not fit the post–Little Rock consensus, yet the demonizing of the indigenes due to the sensational portrayals of "Mau Mau" had rendered virtually radioactive an entente with the resistance. Ford did not help matters when it routinely met delegations in Africa—bereft of Africans.[69]

David Rockefeller, the banking baron, later acknowledged frankly that "for more than forty years after the end of World War II I believed that 'containing' the threat posed by the Soviet Union and counteracting its consistent and unrelenting support of 'wars of national liberation' around the world was the most important task the United States faced as a superpower."[70] The foundation that carried his name had long taken an interest in East Africa,[71] so with these thoughts foremost in mind this leading member of the U.S. ruling elite jetted into Nairobi in late 1958. Accompanied by his spouse, he was also carrying portfolios from the Council on Foreign Relations and the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace, in addition to his own enterprise, the Chase Manhattan Bank.[72]

Official Nairobi gussied up and tidied all as if they were about to entertain a visiting potentate—which, in a sense, they were. From London, the secretary of state for the Colonies advised as much.[73] But soon there was disappointment in Nairobi as noted by legislative leader Sir Ferdinand Cavendish-Bentinck, though he planned to "entertain" them "privately at my house for dinner…" Setting a repetitive pattern, it was felt that they had not "given themselves very adequate time for the observance of conditions as they actually exist in East Africa"[74]—or to put it another way, the immediate shock of seeing the hovels that housed the majority of Africans and the sumptuous lifestyle of Sir Ferdinand could only be softened with an elongated visit.

Like potential landlords inspecting property they might purchase, Rockefeller's visit was only one of many by visiting U.S. dignitaries following the twin shocks of Bandung and Suez. These included an important congressional delegation led by Congressman Wayne Hays,[75] an emissary of Secretary

of State Dulles,[76] the U.S. ambassador to Ethiopia,[77] and others. Tellingly, military and security matters were high on the agenda of these visitors,[78] a matter seen as pressing given the perceived challenge from Moscow.[79] It appeared that the settler regime had begun an initiative involving the "peaceful use of atomic energy," an unsettling prospect for indigenes aware of the colony's white supremacist pretensions.[80]

The problem for Washington was that embracing the settler regime as an ally of sorts was at cross-purposes with the United States' own stated domestic priority of desegregation, not to mention compromising an entente with indigenes in Kenya and elsewhere on the continent. "We are anxious that every facility should be at his disposal," the authorities said of one visiting U.S. military figure.[81] But again, the burden of geography continually intruded for the colony happened to have as a neighbor, Ethiopia, a rare sovereign state on a continent replete with colonies and it was involved in sharp border disputes with Kenya: should Washington tilt toward a settler regime with which it shared obvious commonalities or Addis Ababa, whose sovereignty represented the future?[82]

These visits by U.S. dignitaries were not only a reflection of military and security concerns. With Hollywood's increased interest in the region, combined with the garish headlines blaring stories about African terror, engendered was a remarkable outflow and inflow into the colony. Nairobi goosed the latter by embarking on a propaganda offensive even before the State of Emergency, distributing thousands of pieces of literature "through clubs, institutes, etc." in "view of the wild statements appearing not only in the local but also the overseas press,"[83] just as it carefully scrutinized overseas press coverage with the aim of rebutting unfriendly articles.[84]

Since the colony was a racist state this meant that Nairobi was limited in terms of the immigrants it would accept and given the triple shocks of "Mau Mau," Bandung and Suez, all of which seemed to augur a disorderly retreat of white supremacy, it was not as if there was an overflow straining to gain admission to Kenya. Instead, emigration to the usual spots—Australia, Canada and, of course, the United States—seemed to be increasing.[85] Ironically, the shrieking headlines about "Mau Mau" devised by the settler regime were a terrible advertisement for the colony, particularly given the stiff competition for Europeans provided by South Africa, Australia and, of course, the United States. Nairobi could have received a mother lode of Europeans settlers when unrest in Communist ruled East Germany caused inquires about refugee repatriation in East Africa. Yet, this "aroused considerable controversy among Europeans" in Kenya as these were viewed as "undesirable immigrants." Why? "Those who come from 'welfare states' would demand more wages," said a Kenyan propagandist: "Kenya must look to countries whose inhabitants still have to work hard…"[86]

Given the financial retrenchment by London lamented by Sir Evelyn during the Ford visit, this insight could not have arrived at a more desperate moment. Nairobi waved "inducement pay" at potential subjects, a bonus on top of "the basic salary," as one bureaucrat put it.[87] The sclerotic colonial bureaucracy was hardly able to provide decent housing options, however, which further shrank the possibility of replenishing the quotient of Europeans. After Ghanaian independence

in 1957, Nairobi had the opportunity to absorb the British who were fleeing.[88] But Nairobi not only had financial problems, it also had a severe housing shortage-at least housing deemed suitable for the refined tastes of Europeans. Thomas Jones, who sought work in Nairobi, discovered that to his dismay, as "private accommodation" had to be arranged since it was "extremely unlikely," said one bureaucrat "that Government quarters will be available in the foreseeable future."[89]

Yet despite the shocks and impediments, the regime continued to maintain a modicum of support within the United States. The common anticommunist ideology was one key factor, not to mention the sympathy for those surrounded by Africans, particularly in the former Slave South. Sir Michael Blundell was a not-so-secret weapon of the regime. Born in London in 1907—his ancestral line could be traced to 1132—he was trained as a singer and pianist at Salzburg and arrived in Kenya in 1925; starting as a farm manager, he soon obtained his own. He grew coffee, then asparagus, then cattle. He served in the military and left with the rank of Colonel. He was the chief coordinator of the Emergency from March 1954 to October 1955 and was generally given credit for the undermining of the resistance,[90] which included mass executions and internments.

Sir Michael was, nonetheless, appealing to many U.S. viewers—particularly Euro-Americans—who saw him on television, where he was not an infrequent guest. Roy D. Shaffer of Albany Medical College in New York watched him in the Spring of 1956 and was impressed. "As a Kenyaite [*sic*] (raised in Masailand), I have a fierce love for my country," but this common homeland did not explain wholly Sir Michael's acceptance in the United States.[91] Wiley D. Ganey, a Deputy Commandant at the National War College and a Major General in the U.S. Air Force, was no Kenyan but he too "appreciated hearing [Blundell's] views" when he was in Nairobi.[92] Elvin J. Noel of San Diego, a self-described "ordinary white man," acknowledged that "what happens in Kenya will surely affect the whole of Africa," and was reassured by Sir Michael's leadership in the colony.[93] During the State of Emergency, Sir Michael later acknowledged, "I received a letter from Dallas in Texas, which was addressed to me in childish handwriting. It was from a young American boy, John Bacon by name, who stated that he was a Boy Scout aged twelve years. He wrote to me to ask if I could find . . . and send to him a Mau Mau sword or 'simi'. The letter ended with a postscript 'please see there is blood on it' "—and Sir Michael graciously complied.[94]

F.M. Marshall of Louisville mentioned the flashpoints of Little Rock and Montgomery, sensing Sir Michael's experience with "Mau Mau" would suggest automatic sympathy. "May I congratulate you and others like you," said this man who had "planned to go from Cairo to Cape Town but the Middle East crisis stopped me"—"I was afraid that might be the beginning of World War Three," he said chillingly.[95]

But the perception that Sir Michael provided steady leadership in an uncertain world rocked by "Mau Mau," Suez, and Little Rock, was not the only reason he had appeal in the United States. Pearl Meade of Yucaipa, California was "very proud to feel that I may be a relative of you," since her mother was "Lucy Blundell."[96] Gertrude Blundell of Marblehead, Massachusetts argued similarly.[97]

There were blood ties that gave Euro-Americans emotional connections to the settler regime, just as there were political ties shared by those frightened by the import of "Mau Mau" and Little Rock alike. Yet, the far-sighted in Washington knew that it would be difficult to back naked white supremacy in Nairobi while seeking to retreat from same at home. What was needed was an African leadership untainted by Moscow or "Mau Mau" to lubricate the transition to independence.

Figure 4 Tom Mboya.

Source: Courtesy of Photographs and Prints Division, Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, The New York Public Library, Astor, Lenox and Tilden Foundations.

Tom Mboya, a Nairobi based labor leader, attracted considerable attention in the United States when he visited the United States in the 1950s, convincing many that he was a viable alternative to the much feared "Mau Mau."

12

Labor Will Rule?

"Pour me a double Manhattan and call me Senator McCarthy," quipped the conservative journalist, Smith Hempstone, a future U.S. ambassador to an independent Kenya, "but I had the impression when this conference was finished"—referring to a key confab in Accra in 1958—"that the Pan African movement upon which so many hopes rest and which could be doing so much good was directed either by Communists or fools, possibly both." Singled out for specific criticism was a dark-skinned, cherubic faced, labor leader from Kenya—Tom Mboya.[1]

It was curious that Hempstone would sourly assess Mboya for in other circles he was being viewed as a client of Washington, an alternative to the radicalism thought to be represented by Kenyatta. "They call us racial extremists," charged Malcolm X; his voice rising with insistence as thousands jammed the busy intersection of 125th Street and Seventh Avenue in Harlem, he demanded that context be provided: Well, he continued, "they call Jomo Kenyatta also a racial extremist and Tom Mboya a moderate. It is only the white man's fear of men like Kenyatta," said the man who juxtaposed his leadership to that symbolized by Martin Luther King, Jr., "that makes him listen to men like Mboya. If it were not for the extremists," he affirmed, "the white man would ignore the moderates." The journalist covering this jam-packed event, Louis Lomax, observed that "powerful pro-Nasser Arabs are quietly in Malcolm's corner and many Black Muslim bazaars open with the readings of cabled greetings from 'Our Beloved Brother Gamal Abdel Nasser.'"[2]

The triple shocks of "Mau Mau," followed swiftly by Bandung and Suez had a catalytic impact on the relation of forces both globally and within the United States itself. Many African Americans sympathized instinctively with the underdog in Cairo, which gave a boost to the thought and organization represented by the charismatic Malcolm X. He—and those who followed him—had a visceral distaste for the settler regime in Nairobi. Simultaneously, Washington officially embarked on the road of antiracism found this hard to reconcile with backing of the settlers. What Washington longed for was an African who exuded moderation, who could reassure the uncertain that African liberation did not mean trials for war criminals leading to execution or expropriation of the commanding

heights of the economy. What Washington wanted—and got—was the spectacular rise of Tom Mboya, a labor leader, who was not part of the feared Kikuyu ethnic group but Luo.

Oginga Odinga, a fiery Kenyan leader who was despised in Washington and London (and who too was Luo), has charged that "the British government nurtured" Mboya "as the rising star of Kenya's trade union movement…" There was a "concerted world press campaign," he said accusingly, "to elevate Tom Mboya to the unchallenged leadership of Kenya Africans…" Mboya, he said, "had been feted and sponsored in the United States and with apparently unlimited supplies of foreign money and scholarships," which, for example, allowed him to bring his countryman, Barack Obama, Sr., to the University of Hawaii.[3]

Odinga's harsh indictment has to be weighed against the conservative Hempstone's negative evaluation of the Luo labor leader. For while Hempstone dismissed him as a feckless dupe of the Reds, subsequently it was charged that Mboya was a chief beneficiary of the largesse of the CIA.[4] In the cold light of history it seems—as is often the case when opinions are so polarized—the truth is somewhere between the acerbic evaluations of Odinga and Hempstone. It is clear in retrospect that Kenyatta was not exactly the radical force that Malcolm or Odinga may have envisioned and Mboya was not quite his antipode. For if Mboya were a CIA asset, African Americans during his heyday would have appreciated more African leaders who—as Mboya repeatedly did—charged that "America's standing in Africa must remain affected by the Negro problem at home…" While acknowledging Little Rock, he also did not ignore Bandung and Suez.[5] Yes, Mboya was close to Washington[6]—but what needs to be realized is that when the United States stared down Paris and London during the Suez debacle, it convinced some Africans that they might do the same on their continent as a whole.

Moreover, the horrific policies inflicted upon the Kikuyu in particular, had a devastating impact upon this important ethnic group, which had been the locomotive of resistance against colonialism. Ironically, the repression of the labor movement in black America created fertile soil for the rise of a sort of nationalism that produced Malcolm X,[7] while in Kenya the repression of ethnic nationalism created fertile soil for the rise of a Luo labor leader.

This helps to explain why a journalist in the late summer of 1956 when headlines were warning about looming catastrophes in Budapest and Cairo found himself in extended conversation with a soft-spoken bachelor in a bustling coffee shop of the Mayflower Hotel in Washington, D.C. He was "every bit as polished as an Oxford graduate," was his evaluation of Mboya. Mboya spoke eloquently of the "atrocities" committed by the settlers in the colony. Constructing an analogy he knew would hit home to his audience, he argued that "life in a colony is worse than in a Russian 'protectorate'…" Like a bicycle racer who rides just behind the pack to allow their momentum to drag him along almost effortlessly, Mboya repeatedly linked the fate of Africans with African Americans, which was then undergoing significant revision, thereby providing momentum for Kenya. "The Negro Problem here," he said, "has not been of first concern to the people" of Kenya but it was "growing in importance…"[8] A photographer from the

U.S. labor movement captured the image of him thoughtfully placing a wreath at the Lincoln Memorial to underscore his point.[9]

Mboya's presence in Washington was not only a direct result of the smashing of the mostly Kikuyu driven resistance but also an outgrowth of a spectacular rise in the labor movement in Kenya. "Some of us joined the trade union movement," said Wambui Waiyaki Otieno, "which took over most of our freedom fighting activities between 1955 and 1957…"[10] As the example of Makhan Singh had demonstrated, Kenyan workers long had been a prime opponent of colonialism and the status quo and this hardly slowed down as independence approached.[11] That this was a regional phenomenon had a positive impact on Kenya, as when, for example, a general strike rocked Zanzibar in 1948.[12]

As the leader of Kenyan unions saw it, "Operation Anvil" which was touted as an attempt in 1953 to smash "Mau Mau," was actually aimed at their movements. "Many thousands of workers have suffered untold suffering, many thousands have been killed discriminately because of their colour, they have been robbed of any properties found in their possession," cried Aggrey Minya. "Squatters have been repatriated and robbed of their property and many children are and have died and are starving. When they arrest you or kill you," he charged, "they must brand you as a member of the Mau Mau organization. We have been destroyed and the toll of death is day by day going on as Germany did in SouthWest Africa during 1914 and 1918 with Ovambo people," thus, "all educated and rich people have been killed."[13] British labor saw things somewhat differently: "Operation Anvil" was a response to the fact that "two of Jomo Kenyatta's five close associates were prominent trade unionists."[14]

Soon Minya himself was under attack, which contributed to bitter infighting within the union. He pointed the finger of accusation at a particular colleague—"he was very bitter and very vicious," he said about Mboya, whose name he spelled as "O'boya." He claimed that Mboya was a "state informer and was too interested in politics to make a good Secretary of the [Labor] Federation."[15]

Minya's apprehensions did not halt Mboya's meteoric rise—the Luo labor leader was able to get a valued TUC scholarship to Ruskin College, Oxford, which contributed to his polish. For the battle to influence and control labor was seen as a major prize in this contest. This battle took on a global character when the anti-communist International Confederation of Free Trade Unions (ICFTU) based in Brussels and encompassing the major federations in both the United States and United Kingdom, began to challenge the Communist-influenced World Federation of Trade Unions (WFTU).

A few months after Minya's anguished cry, the ICFTU dispatched to Nairobi one of its top operatives, Jim Bury, President of a local of the United Packinghouse Workers in British Columbia, Canada—though the union itself was born in the United States and had endured its own internal battles over left-wing influence. Bury, who had been active in the non-communist Young Socialist League, was dispatched to lend a hand to Minya's beset federation, which then had a reported 50,000 members.[16]

Bury was not greeted with open arms and soon "expressed considerable concern about possible interference with his mail…" The sandy-haired apostle

of organized labor in Kenya confessed, "I can't go anywhere without a [police officer] on my tail." Still, he was making a serious bid to secure UN intervention concerning the continuation of "forced labour" and the "detention without trial" of Africans.[17] His activism was raising eyebrows among the authorities.[18]

Also causing concern was Mboya's activism, for early on he proved himself to be an adept administrator. Unlike the settlers, Mboya was a foe of racial privilege.[19] But like Minya and Bury, Mboya also was concerned with the draconian restriction of civil liberties that accompanied the State of Emergency. "We have had a very difficult time" he assayed. "Approximately 75% of the national officials of our affiliated unions have been arrested," he said in mid-1954, "and are awaiting screening;" the "finances of the majority of the unions are completely frozen as a result."[20]Unions were "very hard hit," he groaned. The wily Mboya added that he was on his way to a Moral Rearmament meeting, which was bound to elate potential supporters in the United States but added cagily, "you should remove any fears of any effect on me as a result of the visit."[21]

Yet Mboya's wiliness did not stop the hammer blows falling relentlessly on the anticolonial resistance. Security measures inspired supposedly by "Mau Mau," devastated unions. When 30,000 Africans were held for what was euphemistically termed "mass screening," this dragnet swept up the top leadership of the unions—perhaps not coincidentally.[22]

This may be why Bury was greeted so warmly by indigenes, who were all accustomed to those of European descent seeking to bludgeon and sabotage their efforts.[23] Bury and the funding and resources he brought were also essential to Mboya's skyrocketing rise, as he intervened in internal union matters on the Luo leader's behalf. Still, the fact that Bury chose to object to the quotidian white supremacy made him conspicuous. When he traveled to Mombasa in early 1954, the manager of the hotel in which he stayed beckoned Bury into his private office and instructed him quite clearly that he could not have African friends visit in his room. Appalled, Bury reprimanded the manager, telling him that the room was his "home while traveling" and he was a paying customer. The manager would not relent so a principled Bury left the hotel giving him an earful of invective. The Mombasa press was informed of the incident but did not "play the story," said Bury. Yet, he also was looking back over his shoulder at the Communist-led WFTU, who he warned would gain a foothold in the region unless things changed quickly.[24]

For Bury and his comrades were perpetually aware of the challenge to their left. One would have thought that in the dark days of 1954 Bury and Co. would have welcomed to the trenches any who wished to throw in their lot with the overwhelmed indigenes; instead red flags of warning were raised when the "so-called Kenya Committee for Democratic Rights for Kenya Africans" was launched, since it was viewed with asperity as "another of the organizations by which the Communist Party hopes to delude and use our movement."[25] Another labor operative warned that this alleged "Communist front" was "closely associated" with "Peter Koinange," an allegation not designed to help this Kenyan leader gain further access to the United States or improve the mood of his comrade, St. Clair Drake.[26] Since the United States was then adjudged to be second

to West Germany as the biggest foreign buyer of Kenyan exports, this nation's preeminent concerns could hardly be given short shrift.[27] Since "Mau Mau" reportedly made foreign investors uneasy, Washington's smiling approval was even more necessary.[28]

It seemed that Washington did approve of Mboya, irrespective of the evident disdain shown him by the settler regime. But the U.S. authorities were undergoing their own birth pangs of a renewed society and the regime's stubborn adherence to apartheid was not only at odds with the articulated dispensation in Washington but also was seen as providing fertile soil for the growth of a dreaded Marxist movement.

As Little Rock was exploding, Nairobi too was grappling with what its preternaturally tame Legislative Council termed demurely "discrimination in hotels, restaurants and public places." One African allowed to speak railed against the "superiority complex" that allowed for such; "however highly educated," he complained, "however well behaved, however well dressed, he is an African and cannot go to a number of hotels…" Mboya concurred, adding "in my own experience…Europeans may be dirty, badly dressed and even bad mannered but they are allowed in an hotel where I would be turned out." Irate, he continued, "I have been thrown out of a small restaurant in Government Road." Distinguishing his compatriots he assured, "Sir…I am not advocating that the Masai in a blanket should come to the New Stanley Hotel and demand that he should have admission…"Looking westward, he said, "reference has been made by several speakers to the United States." Well, he said, "I have had the privilege of visiting the United States of America and even went as far down as the South."

Invoking the heralded United States, then seen as the epicenter of advanced civilization stung to the quick those settlers who routinely had looked westward for sustenance. "I have been in 46 states in America and I think I have visited America nine times," said the regime's Minister for Commerce and Industry. "I will give him chapter and verse—that discrimination still exists in certain of these states," he insisted correctly. So, he noted triumphantly, if discrimination was acceptable in the advanced United States, then why not the colony? Particularly, since—he alleged—"there is not discrimination—very little—in railway travel in East Africa" but "there is discrimination in railway travel in the Southern States of America. There is discrimination in other directions, where we have got rid of discrimination in Kenya, as in cinemas and in theatres. And, indeed, until I think, three or four years ago in the only legitimate theatre existing in the capital—Washington, D.C." He had a point. The stain of Jim Crow had not been eradicated from Washington's shield.

The future Kenyan president, Daniel Arap-Moi would have none of these global comparisons. "The situation as a whole in the Rift Valley is intolerable," he insisted. "If you wanted food in Nakuru you would not be allowed in any of the European hotels and restaurants. Last week," he said, "when I was coming back to Nairobi I was hungry and could not lunch at one of the Asian hotels in Nakuru…" Outrageously, he "was asked to leave;" yes, he concluded with disgust, "most of the hotels up-country are more hostile than those in Nairobi…"[29]

But it was Mboya who had the rare authority to invoke the example of the United States—the historic bulwark of the settler regime—to undermine the arguments of the colonizer. This was first-hand experience at that, gleaned from a visit where he had been heralded as a fresh new face and a brand new voice.

At the same time, as Washington searched for an alternative route in a Kenya where Kenyatta was jailed and Koinange was viewed suspiciously, Mboya stood even taller. By mid-1957 even his old friend, St. Clair Drake, was having second thoughts about his fellow Hampton alumnus. "It was obvious to me in 1955 that Mbiyu was considered 'washed up' as a political leader by British leaders," he said; "at one point in Kenyatta's trial, too, someone had said that Koinange and Kenyatta had tried to make them take an oath…I have no way of knowing whether Koinange was implicated in organizing Mau Mau," he added, indicting him with faint absolution.[30] Drake was correct in his view of London's evaluation of Koinange. That his father was clamoring for the return of land to his people did not recommend him to London.[31] One influential indigene condemned Koinange sharply, to the delight of the settler regime.[32] The authorities were suspicious when it just so happened that Koinange bumped into Claude Barnett, the leading Negro publisher, when both happened to be at the London office of the secretary of state for the Colonies. Koinange, once more, was seeking to deliver a "written plea from the people of Kenya,"[33] a copy of which was passed on to Barnett who sought permission before citing it.[34] By 1957 when Drake was putting distance between himself and his erstwhile friend, the authorities were mulling whether Koinange should be detained if he returned to Kenya.[35]

It was in such a fashion, suffused with skullduggery, that the path was cleared for Mboya's rise. His rise was part and parcel of the altered approach Washington adopted toward Africa in the aftermath of Bandung, Suez and the 1954 high court ruling calling for the abandonment of Jim Crow regulations. Once it was thought African Americans should be kept far away from the continent. The new idea was to deploy them there on the premise that they could better ingratiate with and bond with indigenes to the advantage of Washington and to the detriment of the putative allies in Western Europe and the actual foe in Moscow. That is how Maida Springer-Kemp, an African American trade unionist, found herself in Dar es Salaam in the mid-1950s, a launching pad for her development of a deepening relationship with Mboya.

A battle-tested anti-Communist, she worked with the similarly oriented International Ladies Garment Workers Union. She was surely eclectic, claiming the "Garvey movement" was essential to her "identity," while the veteran U.S. intelligence operative, Jay Lovestone, "was one of the men I later in life came to know very well. He had a marked influence on me," she said, "in terms of widening my horizons of world politics." Irving Brown, another seasoned finagler in foreign climes, was another close friend of hers. She also was friendly with George Padmore, who too had turned toward anticommunism. Thus, unlike Robeson and Du Bois who could not obtain passports for travel, she had no difficulty in getting one, which allowed her to disembark in Tanganyika in 1956 as a representative of the U.S. labor movement, which like the ICFTU too was disquieted with Communist influence in the region.

Thus, it seemed predestined that she would meet Mboya which she did when he was 23. Mboya and her "son were peer ages," which made her feel closer to him. "I always thought Tom was my second son. He spent his first night in the United States in our home." If her recollections are accurate, she met him during the earliest stages of the State of Emergency, when he was in sharp conflict with Minya over the direction of the unions in Kenya; if so, her aid and connections—along with that of Bury's—were no doubt essential in Mboya prevailing.

But indicative of the new U.S. orientation that Springer-Kemp represented and that "Mau Mau," Bandung, Suez and Little Rock symbolized, she was outraged by the conditions she witnessed in Nairobi. "In the mid-fifties when I met Tom," she said, "preventive detention was still the way of life and Africans had to be off the street by nine o'clock at night unless you had a pass," ala apartheid South Africa; "you could be arrested summarily. I have been threatened with arrest," said this dark-skinned figure, "because as I walked down the street, it was assumed that I was an African woman being on the street without a permit…" "I looked like an African," she recalled, "and they took a dim view of this." By "law, an African could not borrow money, more than five pounds which [was] the equivalent of fourteen dollars," while there were "no such restrictions on the European community;" the "purpose of the legislation would be restrictive in order that the African would have to work on the European farm…"[36]

Her meeting Mboya led to his triumphal first trip to the United States in 1956.[37] Springer-Kemp by her own admission was "actively involved" with bringing Mboya to the United States. "After Tom's arrival," she noted chattily, "and after he spoke at a meeting that had been put together, he would go home with me. I had a little broken-down Ford which I didn't drive. A friend of mine, the Reverend Dr. Pauli Murray," another leading non-Communist activist, "drove," as they "took Tom to Brooklyn to my mother. And she," like many who encountered the personable Kenyan, "fell in love with him immediately. Tom would sit in the backyard writing notes, and doing other things and she would take him a glass of cold milk and something to snack on." Mboya rocketed into prominence in the United States—"he caught on like fire," she said. "He has this soft, beautiful face," he was a "beautiful black young man, very black young man," she stressed, "whose mind was like a sharp sword."[38]

He had arrived in the United States at a fraught moment. The Robesons' Council on African Affairs was liquidating, while Negro rights seemed to be heading in the opposite direction. New forces were rising to fill the resultant vacuum required as an outgrowth of Washington's renewed interest in Africa with the CAA safely out of the picture and the prospect that the United States would soon be supplanting London in the predominantly English-speaking regions of the continent. Coincident with the State of Emergency, the NAACP began to notice "America's growing concern for Africa." There was the "special issue of 'LIFE' magazine on Africa" which was a "sell-out and the special African issue of the 'Saturday Review'," which was "widely read. Newspapers have sent special reporters to cover Africa, such as Edward Lahey of the Knight Newspapers and Albion Ross of the 'New York Times.' 'JET' and 'EBONY,'" the newly minted organs of a Negro chain, posted a "roving reporter in Africa…" Before World War II "only

[a few] students from Africa were studying in America," whereas the figure had "jumped to 1125 in the academic year 1952–1953…" Thus, it was announced grandly, a "small group of persons met in New York City in December 1952 to explore the need for a new national organization devoted to Africa and with clearly a non-Communist and non-sectarian organization."[39] Thus was born the American Committee on Africa (ACOA), which began to carry the torch for anticolonial Kenya and which helped to propel Mboya into the forefront of leadership.

The NAACP, which with the conclusion of the Pacific War had begun to shun the CAA as if they had a viral contagion, embraced the ACOA.[40] But the NAACP leader, Arthur Spingarn, who unlike Wilkins was not a Negro and may not have felt as great a sense of urgency about Africa, was "not too favorably impressed" with the group given the dearth of "apparent qualifications for the work proposed"—"I recommend caution," he concluded.[41] When ACOA leader, George Houser, appeared on the radio with Henry Moon of the NAACP, CAA leader, W. Alphaeus Hunton complimented the latter leader for his "splendid" remarks. "I particularly liked the way you straightened Houser out on the fascist character of the South African government…"[42] Discarding the normal apprehension of being in touch with the Council, Moon replied agreeing that "Houser did not quite comprehend the process of the development of the fascist regime in South Africa."[43]

Subsequently the Soviet writer, Oleg Ignatyev was to charge that the ACOA was "used" by Washington for "its 'anti-colonial' offensive in Africa" and he identified Springer-Kemp's comrade, Irving Brown as being part of this cabal.[44] This allegation was hotly disputed by ACOA, though it remains true that Houser—who too befriended Mboya—was in contact with the shady Brown in Paris, once after returning from a turbulent Congo.[45]

Springer-Kemp's admiring biographer notes that it was "alleged that Springer served as the CIA contact officer with Mboya," while the subject of her biography concedes she met "the equivalent of a CIA official" in London, "who interviewed me," the "program didn't last long it offended a whole lot of people in the international community and raised a great storm for the United States…" Springer-Kemp admitted further that Mboya's "American connections were alleged to be a demonic CIA plot to undermine" Kenya. She was in a position to know since she described a meeting with herself, "Jay Lovestone, Irving Brown and another person," which was bound to cause concern given these men's questionable connections to intelligence agencies.

As she saw it, chief among those spreading nasty rumors about Mboya were not solely those of the left; no, she countered, clapping her hands for emphasis, "this was generated in part by the British TUC," or trade unions. "They did not like George Meany," the rigidly conservative head of the unions in the United States, who bragged about never walking a picket-line. Since she was sent to the region as an emissary of Meany's movement, there was "outright hostility" displayed toward her. As she saw it, the "national pride" of British trade unionists was hurt when colonialism was attacked. Besides she received "constant harassment" from the Colonial Office while in the region. "Once I looked at newspaper

headlines in Kenya," she later remembered, "which said I was there with blood money from the trade union movement in the United States from the Teamsters," the union known to have ties to organized crime. "I was called everything, a demagogue and was accused of bringing blood money."[46]

Yet again, Mboya's ascendancy and that of those who surrounded him, was not uncontested by the still powerful U.S. conservatives, whose sympathies were with the settler regime. Instead, it was the growing liberal forces symbolized by Senator John F. Kennedy, who were groping for a more realistic policy toward Kenya and Africa and, thus, gravitated toward Mboya. Still, Hempstone's scalding critique of Mboya's performance at the Pan-African gathering in Accra in 1958 was suggestive of the lack of unanimity about him in leading circles.

For the heady winds of independent Accra left Mboya giddy. "Since my return from Ghana," he told his friends in the British Labour Party, "I have decided to join and organize the Nairobi People's Convention Party…"[47] Labour was not pleased. "Tom, himself, seems to have gone slightly 'hay-wire,' having returned from Ghana with a firm conviction that the he can create a situation where they can gain independence within five years and run the country themselves," they were told in early 1958, "It is so terribly unrealistic that I can't think that he really believes this…"[48]

Even before this gathering in Ghana, there was angst in Washington. This nation's independence in 1957 could be grouped easily with the landmark developments in Bandung, Suez and Little Rock as one more indicator that colonialism was untenable. "The Conference is likely to pose…difficult problems for the United States," the State Department announced solemnly, as it "will probably heighten rather than reduce the conflict of interests which exists in East and Central Africa between the European minority on the one hand and the African majority on the other;" similarly, the "growth of racialism in East Africa could in time upset the harmonious race relations which now generally prevail in West Africa…"[49]

Washington should also have factored in the response of African Americans, buoyed by the waves of African liberation. As soon as he arrived in Accra for this gathering, Congressman Charles Diggs of Detroit—an African American who was to become a leading spokesman on African matters—came to his Embassy, according to a bureaucrat present, "and more or less said, 'here I am; what would you like me to do?' " This "took me aback," confessed Diggs' interlocutor, perhaps not accustomed to dealing with a Negro in a powerful position. Still, at "Diggs' request," he "sent an invitation to Tom Mboya" to attend lunch; "at first I tried to talk Congressman Diggs out of my asking Mboya," he confessed.[50]

This Accra gathering represented a nightmare for U.S. conservatives, dramatized when Shirley Graham Du Bois—the African American writer and spouse of W.E.B. Du Bois (she was thought to be a Communist)—excoriated U.S. imperialism in her remarks and expressed solidarity with China.[51] London saw the hand of the American Committee on Africa when a Kenyan leader called for Kenyatta's freedom. This "spontaneity" was "well organized," claimed the *London Times*—it "had an American side to it." Washington was "clearly worried by the presence of large [Egyptian] and Soviet contingents."[52]

In that context Mboya's tame remarks about colonialism seemed downright anodyne, but that is not the way pro-colonial U.S. conservatives viewed it. Yet the very act of this Accra meeting was seen as a provocation in Nairobi and Mboya's presence there was viewed similarly. Just after the proclamation of the State of Emergency, Sir Michael Blundell received a "secret" report about "possible development of civil disobedience in Kenya colony and suggested countermeasures." Supposedly, a "plan of action" had been received by the Kenya African Union from Nkrumah's "Convention Peoples Party of the Gold Coast. This plan was discussed and adopted with certain modifications." Typically, Nairobi proposed "prompt and ruthless detention" of the "identified leaders," though this should "not" be accorded "press publicity."[53]

Washington was in a quandary as the supposedly somnolent 1950s proceeded. Settler regimes and, indeed, colonialism itself seemed imperiled: both were longtime allies, backed by a considerable percentage of public opinion spooked by the thought that the demise of either or both spelled doom for their own Jim Crow. At the same time these allies were disconcerted, to put it mildly, by the Suez fiasco which demonstrated, in their minds, U.S. unreliability. As they peered into their crystal ball, many U.S. liberals did not foresee a viable future for colonialism, nor the settler regime in Nairobi—but the alternative to both seemed all too close to the frightful Communists. At least as far as Kenya goes, Mboya seemed an answer to their prayers—he was close to deeply anticommunist U.S. labor—which helps to explain why he was feted on his journeys across the Atlantic.

These awkward dilemmas greeted President Eisenhower's emissary, Philip D. Block III, who traveled to the continent in the late summer of 1958 in order to assess Washington's options. Putting it plainly, he asserted, "Africa's greatest problem today is a political one" and "the problem centers in Kenya, the Rhodesias and the Union of South Africa.." The United States, unmarked by colonial possession in Africa and hailed because of Suez "appears to have great popularity among both the whites and the Negroes in Africa," albeit for different reasons—"especially the latter" was admiring of Washington. The United States saw in the continent "probable allies in the Cold War, a source of raw materials for our metal industries and a wonderful market for our exports…"

But there was a fly in the ointment: "we were quite often asked by both whites and Negroes about Little Rock. This event has been given great play in African newspapers," he lamented, "in an effort to show that Africa is not the only place that has racial troubles. This has had a disturbing effect on the [Africans] who had thought that the United States is the country where all men are equal." Frankly, he admitted, "it has hurt our prestige."

Kenya was a horror show. "One still sees barbed wire around native camps, big signs in hotel rooms telling guests to be sure to lock their doors at night and the streets free of Europeans after dark. If a white dare walk on Nairobi's streets at night, he is usually followed by a native constable to make sure that no harm befalls him." Amid the lavish luxury of European settlers, the "natives" were "probably the poorest in East Africa. They have the poorest lands to farm, are often dressed in rags, have very poor housing, schools and hospitals…" Block's "feeling" was "that the whites are biding their time,

waiting to see what is going to happen in the Union of South Africa," and like-minded regimes, which was heartening since Pretoria seemed stable, while in Mozambique, "the natives are so afraid of the Portuguese that one does not need to lock his door when going out…"[54]

Hence, there was little sentiment among the settler regime about arriving at a settlement with the indigenes; certainly there was no enthusiasm about reaching an agreement with Mboya, who represented workers eager for wage increases that the settlers saw coming straight from their pockets. For his part, Mboya did not stint in his verbal fusillades launched at the regime. After returning from his stay at Ruskin College in the United Kingdom,[55] he collaborated with the mildly socialist Fabians, which some in Nairobi—and Washington—viewed as flaming radicals. But Mboya told the Fabians that in his homeland "European supremacy remains basically unchanged. In the Legislative Council, the principle of parity has been maintained on the basis of equality between European Elected Members on the one hand," a tiny minority, "and the Non-European Members on the other," a vast majority. "Many Europeans own some hundreds of thousands of acres," he said, "while in some of the African areas land-hunger" persists.[56] If anything, Mboya's stinging words were exceeded in intensity by others.[57]

Such words, particularly when they were echoed by others, were not designed to endear Mboya to the regime he opposed, nor did it ease Washington's dilemma of trying to stride a narrow path between him and his opponents. Yet the regime did not see any neutrality in Washington when Detroit's United Auto Workers was allowed—in the words of the ICFTU—to provide a "generous gift to us of the Willys Jeep station wagon, which looks resplendent parked in the street outside our far from palatial offices…"[58] As the regime saw it, the ICFTU, the beneficiary of these gifts in Kenya, was not involved in a righteous battle against the advance of Communist trade unions but was a front for Mboya who was seeking to dislodge them.

The suave and charming Mboya had made quite an impression in Detroit and elsewhere during his visit. Mary W. Francis of the union's Women's Department, confided that "after your visit to Detroit I had occasion to talk to the girls in this office about the interesting conversation we had. They immediately started asking a million questions that I surely could not answer. Don't be surprised if you receive letters from girls you don't know, asking questions about Africa."[59] An attractive and charismatic bachelor, then in his twenties, and a tireless letter-writer besides, Mboya was bound to develop a new regiment of correspondents—and friends—in the strategically sited Motor City. But his enchanting presence was not limited to Michigan. He was "very thrilled to receive the [Nat] King Cole albums," from Gwendolyn Young of the United Steelworkers in Pittsburgh, "and have not stopped playing it.[60]

Mboya's courting of public opinion in the United States paid dividends. Writers sympathetic to the settler regime, like Elspeth Huxley, had had a virtual free hand in savaging the resistance in the mainstream U.S. press but when she did this after Mboya's visit, Maida Springer-Kemp complained bitterly to the *New York Times*.[61] Huxley "speaks for the Kenya settler and white paramountcy," she insisted.[62]

Mboya's charm offensive yielded results, providing delightful headlines that contrasted sharply with the reporting that had focused on the allegedly atavistic "Mau Mau." "No simple tribesman," *TIME* magazine, an agenda shaper, burbled, "Mboya bounces around the countryside in a Volkswagen. His library is studded with the works of Mark Twain, Tom Paine and Plato…"[63]

Though Mboya was being hailed in the United States, his reception by the settler regime was hardly effusive. They increased their surveillance of him, startled as they were by the crowd that greeted him in August 1957 on his return from a trip to London; there were "1[,]750 people inside the hall and between 2[,]000 and 3[,]000 outside" said Mervyn Colet Manby, the officer who was "in personal command of all police engaged in maintaining order" on that fateful day.[64]

Officer Manby was unimpressed with Mboya and was disturbed with the potential for subversion he was said to represent. The Luo labor leader was "entirely unresponsive to the requests of the Police," he snarled, as "resentment of police control and hostility" was "openly expressed." The "crowd at the Makadara Hall of some 4000 persons was the biggest I have had to deal with at these political meetings," he said. "These meetings were having a demoralizing effect upon the African ranks of the police," who were essential to the maintenance of settler power; he "urge[d] the banning of all African political meetings in Nairobi for three months…"[65] He was not singular in his view: David Newman, the ICFTU representative in Nairobi knew that there were a "small number of my compatriots who have settled here and have established themselves as farmers and who will [go] to many (or any?) lengths to maintain their privileges at the expense of the African population. They are not blind. They see the writing on the wall"—but "you can't call them ostriches because they are too vicious…"[66]

It was not long before Mboya found himself on trial on questionable charges—conspiracy to commit a misdemeanor and to publish defamatory material was the allegation.[67] "Bwana Tom goes to court" on charges of "conspiracy and criminal libel,"[68] was how *TIME* facetiously portrayed the utterly serious charges.

Springer-Kemp was blunt: she knew that his "counsel is an avowed Communist with all of the concomitant implications. Knowing your consistent anticommunist positions"—or, at least, she thought she knew—"and dedication to democratic and constitutional procedures, I am sure you will be able to clear up some of the questions that have been raised…" She and her fellow labor leader, A. Philip Randolph had held a meeting to raise funds for his defense; "however, the question was raised here too on Mr. D.N. Pritt," the alleged Red. "The issues at stake on the trial charges are clear and urgent to us in this unofficial group. We will raise money," she sighed in despair, "but it will require three times as much effort and produce one third of the financial returns."[69] Didn't he realize that he was playing into the hands of the settler regime by hiring a Communist lawyer?

Mboya's anticommunist supporters in the United States were about to revolt. They had vouched for his bona fides in a nation quite jittery about Red advance. They had gone along with the ouster of influence of titanic figures like Robeson and Du Bois and now it seemed they were about to be tarred with the same red brush that had befallen the two giants. Victor Reuther of the United Auto Workers (UAW), a skilled infighter and master of the art of purging Reds, told

his similarly talented brother, Walter—head of the union—that this was all too "disturbing," this choice of a "notorious Communist attorney…"[70]

Mboya sought to explain the slim pickings in choosing a lawyer for an African accused in Nairobi. "I am aware that some of our friends may not very well approve of our choice,"[71] he replied tactfully, but the experienced Pritt had defended Kenyatta and was no rookie in political cases. "I am sure you have no doubts as to my political philosophy," he reminded Springer-Kemp. "There is no question of our sympathizing with Communist tendencies or beliefs," he emphasized. "I hope our friends in the USA will try to understand our position"[72] though he did not engage the relevant point of why he should give an ideological litmus test to one seeking to save him from the gallows. Presumably reassured, Springer-Kemp later gave him a ringing endorsement, affirming that "he is a good trade unionist fully aware of the international Communist apparatus."[73] In the event, Mboya escaped the fate of his fellow leader, Kenyatta, and was able to soldier on. In fact, soon he was to be found again in the United States itself, greeted by enthusiastic and rapturous acclaim.

13

Working-Class Hero?

London was not pleased with the glowing account by the leading African American journalist, Lerone Bennett, of Tom Mboya's rhapsodically received 1959 visit to the United States.

"A co-ed swooned when he acknowledged her profuse congratulations with two words, 'thank you' and a full showing of his brooding eyes…"[1] It was not inappropriate for London to have paid so much attention to a random encounter for this vignette was simply symptomatic of a broader embrace of Mboya—and through him, a free Kenya.[2] For in this nation that had just been rocked by Little Rock and contained an African American population then surging toward equality, events in Kenya seemed all too familiarly horrible. Mboya's visit was highly auspicious in that context.

The Luo labor leader needed a victory at this point. Omar Becu of the International Transport Workers Federation had bumped into him in Paris after Mboya's first trip to the United States and found him ill at ease.[3] This was to change.

The ACOA, whose own rise marked the downfall of the Council on African Affairs (just as Kenyatta's incarceration marked the ascension of Mboya), was buoyant, as well they should have been since the visit seemed to be their idea. Meeting with U.S. officials in early 1959, their leader, George Houser—in addition to fingering W. Alphaeus Hunton as author of an article in the U.S. Communist newspaper on the controversial Accra meeting—"said that he was very disturbed by the image of the United States which exists in the minds of many African leaders," they were "highly suspicious of the West and of the United States" and "these suspicions have a racial basis." Washington thought these remarks sufficiently moving that they were distributed to all their legations in Africa[4]—then smoothed the path for Mboya's arrival.

Meeting in the Spring of 1959, the ACOA leadership proclaimed that "Tom Mboya's tour has been an outstanding success. High points included an interview by a panel of 'Meet the Press'; visits with Vice President Nixon, Adlai Stevenson, the Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs, the Secretary of Labor, Walter Reuther and George Meany; extended stays in Detroit under the immediate auspices of the United Auto Workers; and in Pittsburgh under the

United Steelworkers…" There were "numerous radio, TV and press interviews," along with "major addresses at Carnegie Hall, the annual ADA [Americans for Democratic Action] convention"—and much, much more, including a tête-à-tête with the future U.S. president, John F. Kennedy, whose opposition to French colonialism in Algeria, had signaled a reinvigorated U.S. policy toward Africa.[5]

"Almost every one of Mboya's meetings was packed beyond expectations," the ACOA's leader, George Houser, declared. "Twenty-seven hundred people paid to hear him speak at Carnegie Hall," while "hundreds were turned away. One thousand were turned away at Rackham Auditorium in Detroit." Uber-banker, David Rockefeller arranged a dinner in his honor. A fund appeal on behalf of bringing students from Kenya to the United States was led by Jackie Robinson, the sports star, and brought "amazing results."[6] W.L. Woods of the British Embassy in Washington was alarmed. The "highlight of the tour," he said was Mboya's Carnegie Hall appearance where he was handed a $10,000 check, though he was elated to note that "this meeting received comparatively little coverage in the New York press because they took greater interest in the incident created by the fact that Israel had not been invited to a reception…" This check was exceeded by the $35,000 he got from the AFL-CIO in Chicago—"this was not an isolated case," either, Woods moaned. He could not deny that Mboya spoke to "millions" via television: "his visit will certainly have enhanced the reputation of the [ACOA]," he admitted in a glum indication of what this might mean for colonialism.[7]

Mboya, then unmarried, was residing in the African section of Nairobi in a humble book-crammed apartment, but these unassuming surroundings did not hamper his ability to walk among the powerful. London retained a picture of Mboya on a picket-line with Leon Davis, militant leader of the hospital workers union in New York City and known to be close to the Communist Party—though they acknowledged that "one of [Mboya's] boyhood heroes" was the notorious Tory, Winston Churchill. That was hardly comforting since in the same breath, Mboya "said Negroes can organize demonstrations" and "support organizations like the American Committee on Africa" in order to undermine British colonialism in East Africa.[8]

Vice President Richard Nixon, presumably unconcerned about the negative impact on colonialism, scribbled notes to Mboya, complimenting him on the extremely positive press coverage he was receiving: "I had a most interesting visit with Mr. Julius Nyerere on Friday," said Nixon, speaking in early 1960 of the anticolonial leader based in Dar es Salaam, and "he spoke glowingly of your leadership in Kenya as well as throughout Africa."[9] For his part, the gracious Mboya told the vice president, "I will never forget your kindness in driving with me to Howard University," where the Luo labor leader's remarks were received enthusiastically.[10] James D. Hughes, Nixon's chief aide, acknowledged in May 1959 that "the Vice President had a most interesting visit with Mr. Tom Mboya last week."[11] The overly busy Vice-President, then campaigning to be President, still found time to tell Mboya, "how sorry I am that I was not able to see you during your recent visit."[12] Mboya had bi-partisan appeal. Impressively both Nixon and Walter Reuther of the UAW, a leading liberal, both were "impressed with Mboya's 'maturity' and broad understanding of world problems…"[13]

Mboya was one of the first Africans to appear on national television in the United States, a factor not to be downplayed given the usual "Tarzan" and "Jungle Jim" images that portrayed the continent insultingly. There were numerous nervous questions by journalists on NBC's "Meet the Press" about Communists and the fate of the European minority, which Mboya answered to their satisfaction. He parried the former inquiries by observing that desegregation battles in the United States—for example, Little Rock—had "been very bad publicity" for Washington, not least in terms of Cold War calculations.[14]

The fear of Communists and nervousness about London were effective shields for Mboya. Asked "do you think that British lack of insight into colonialism raises the danger of Soviet penetration into the Middle East?" Mboya's terse response—"I think so"—happened to validate the current idea that London should be ousted altogether from influence. Asked "is there now intolerance of the whites" in Africa, Mboya disagreed. He was also asked if "Mau Mau" would "rise again" which he too found dubious. Lobbed a softball in his wheelhouse—"have the American desegregation difficulties in any way affected the prestige and influence of the United States in Africa?"—he hammered it beyond the warning track: "This has been very bad publicity for the United States of course," said Mboya disapprovingly; it "raised doubts in the minds of many of our people as to the good intentions, the sincerity and motives of the United States. When the host concluded by announcing the forthcoming guest—"next week, Dr. Fidel Castro, Prime Minister of Cuba"—the gravity of the times was further underlined.[15]

Given such company, Mboya was able to emerge as a calming moderate, a perception validated by the admiring press coverage he received. "He is fairly tall (about 5–10), smooth skinned and extremely handsome" who has "already made a deep impression on millions of Americans in his two NBC television appearances—the first on 'Meet the Press', the second on Dave Garroway's 'Today':"[16] such gushing was typical of what was said about him in the news media.

Jackie Robinson, who had expressed reservations about Kenyatta—to Robeson's dismay—was unreserved in his adulation for Mboya.[17] John Henrik Clarke, who was to become a disciple of Malcolm X, then found Mboya "great" and "impressive."[18] The journalist, Stan Meisler, was not far wrong when he asserted that "for America," Mboya "[is] the magazine cover boy of Africa"—a perception concretized when he received a much desired *TIME* magazine cover.[19]

Similarly important was the warm embrace he received from Victor Reuther of the United Auto Workers, who managed to transcend his concern over Mboya's employment of a Communist lawyer.[20] Reuther had reason to be pleased since Mboya's visit had energized youth in a way that augured well for pushing back against conservatives, whose strength imperiled future gains for his union. Thus, on a warm Friday afternoon, 800 University of Michigan students remained on campus to hear Mboya speak.[21]

The electrifying impact Mboya had on campuses is a little-acknowledged aspect of the revolt that was then brewing which was to rock the nation. At Howard University in Washington, DC, whose students—including the young man then known as Stokeley Carmichael—were to play a leading role in the tumultuous events that unfolded in the coming decade, Mboya upheld the torch

of liberation for Africa. Dignitary that he was, Mboya was delayed for forty-five minutes while conferring with Vice President Nixon, as students, foreign ambassadors, and various officials cooled their heels amidst the standing-room only audience. But the stormy applause that greeted his words suggested that his tardiness was not miffing.[22] What made Mboya so popular at a place like Howard was his willingness to add ballast to the emerging struggle for equality in the United States itself. "The struggle of the American Negro for civil rights is the same struggle of the African to end colonialism. We feel that we have a common enemy on a common front" This also had the added advantage of giving heft to his own movement for liberation since it was evident that Jim Crow would have to go. "The only reason America is morally ineffective (in world leadership)," said Mboya "is because she has a domestic disease. How can the United States ask the prime minister of South Africa to stop apartheid? The prime minister's answer is simple: 'go back home and deal with Mississippi' "—sensitive remarks Nairobi thought worthy of retention.[23]

At a confab of the liberal anticommunist Americans for Democratic Action Mboya's words were greeted warmly. He took a swing at the popular writer Robert Ruark, a chief interpreter of Africa for the United States, because of his "poison pen sketches of Africans as primitive savages…" But he kept returning to the pressing domestic concern of the United States that intersected with Kenya's own struggle: "the segregation problem," he concluded "is another thing which deserves your urgent attention…"[24]

Rather deftly, Mboya recognized that by speaking of the Negro he was indirectly speaking of Kenya while aiding the long-term goal of enhancing the strength of this U.S. minority which in turn would push for the liberation of Kenya.[25] It is doubtful if before or since a foreigner has spoken so frequently and received so much attention when addressing the United States' most malignant domestic problem.

Further, Mboya may have brought as much attention to South Africa as any who had visited Washington, for his repetitive theme was: "how can American condemn apartheid in South Africa with a Mississippi in its own backyard?" Mboya's dramatic intervention in the internal affairs of the United States was further revealed when he condemned both "Back-to-Africa" movements popular since the heyday of Marcus Garvey and the use of "hair straighteners and skin whiteners by American Negroes," thereby serving as a harbinger of the "Black Is Beautiful" trend which was to burst on to the scene in the following decade.[26]

Mboya's visit marked not only a turning point for the lengthy struggle to liberate Kenya, it also served to hasten the ouster of colonialism from the continent as a whole. What had given Mboya's visits—and words—a sense of urgency was the perception that the United States could be falling behind in the ongoing contest with Moscow. The orbiting of Sputnik was pointed to in this regard, with the fear emerging that rockets from outer space could soon be raining down on Washington. A. Philip Randolph, the leading Negro trade unionist, reflected this concern when he told the ICFTU leadership that "certainly it should be obvious that the Russian leaders consider Africa a primary target for their penetration and work…"[27]

"If the United States of America and especially the AFL-CIO do not bestir themselves and become deeply involved in the struggle of the African people for independence and freedom," warned A. Philip Randolph, repeatedly "the swelling tides of African nationalism may run away from Western democracy towards Russian Communist totalitarianism…"[28] Springer-Kemp concurred wholeheartedly.[29] Walter Reuther of the UAW echoed these nervous sentiments.[30]

As a result of these worries, goodies flowed into Nairobi as an outgrowth of Mboya's journey. The Dictaphone he received from Chicago insured that the peripatetic Mboya would continue to be in close contact with all the new friends in North America he had gained.[31] "I was also very happy," Mboya told a UAW official, "that you successfully arranged for me to meet a number of leading Negro personalities"—and this was no exaggeration.[32] Even before Mboya's arrival, A. Philip Randolph had come to Nairobi bearing a check for $35,000. "I first met him in 1956," said Mboya speaking of Randolph to his newest friend, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. "Today in my office I have a photograph of myself standing between George Meany" and the railway labor leader. "It was an exciting meeting," said Mboya speaking of Randolph "for at the airport, many of my countrymen had come to bid me farewell…"[33]

This picture—and more so, this gift—was an indication of Mboya's ever closer relationship with Negro leaders. The important publisher, Claude Barnett, now in his corner, reminded the Luo labor leader that—not least due to Mboya—"American Negro newspaper concern in African affairs has multiplied this past three or four years,"[34] that is, from the time of Mboya's first visit in 1956. Barnett, was involved in "recruiting American Negro staff for service" in Africa by 1948[35] and according to the Rockefeller Foundation was "very much concerned with the efforts of leftist groups to drive a wedge between Negroes and whites in this country and in Africa…"[36]

It seemed that Mboya's office had become the unofficial government in Nairobi—even Lewis E. Rosen of Ringling Bros., Barnum & Bailey Circus, asked the Luo labor leader of all people for aid in beefing up his enterprise.[37] Perry Hansberry of the noted Chicago family that produced the celebrated playwright, Lorraine Hansberry, wanted Mboya's aid in "importing monkeys from West Africa for the purpose of manufacturing Salk vaccine";[38] it was not readily apparent how Mboya could help here either but as the face of Africa in North America, his office in Nairobi was also thought to be the informal headquarters of a continent.

Sensing which way the tides were surging, the settler regime sprung into action, working overtime to discredit Mboya. He had made a whopping hundred speeches in a mere thirty-seven days, had shaken numerous hands and rubbed shoulders at many receptions in the United States. Yet when he returned home he was treated like a criminal, subjected to a two-hour search at the airport with various papers confiscated.[39] Mboya, who had begun his working life as a sewer inspector, may have thought that his early working life prepared him well for the sliming he was to receive.[40] "Since my return," Mboya told Walter Reuther, "the local press have engaged in a war against me and the sympathetic friends I have in the United States…" Why? "They feel I was given too much attention," he said.[41]

Even before he had landed back in Nairobi, the appropriately named League of Empire Loyalists was denouncing him in the local press because of his alleged "cataract of untruths, distortions, and omissions."[42] In Nairobi it was thought to be discrediting to note of Mboya that "until recently his home had no electricity and no telephone" and to underscore that he "considers himself a Socialist" and the "Nkrumah of East Africa," not to mention a "lounge-suited Luo tribesman…"[43] An official at the authoritative *East African Standard*, dismissed Mboya as a "young tyrant-in-the-making. He is clearly a dictator by inclination": Mboya, it was said with acidity, "skates around the suggestions of Communism" which was a "revealing habit" indeed.[44]

There was apprehension since Mboya's visit—given that he was seen as the face of Africa in a major power—was having regional ripples. U.S. diplomats in Dar es Salaam noticed that newspapers there, "including the English and Swahili press, have given front page publicity daily to the current visit" of Mboya. The Governor there, Sir Richard Turnbull, "remarked glumly and without earlier conversational connection, that he was troubled to see the publicity given to Africans 'like Mboya' and especially disturbed to see such people as Eleanor Roosevelt 'associating' with him."[45]

There were consoling aspects of the Mboya visit, as the colonizers perceived things. When he spoke at Harvard there was a "rather paternalistic remark from the principal professor in African Studies" terming him "an intelligent young boy."[46] Even a devotee of the AFL-CIO reportedly told the anticommunist labor journalist, Victor Riesel that this group "which hasn't done much about civil rights in the last few years, keeps its conscience clean by condemning colonialism in Africa. But those boys don't know anything about Africa."[47]

Yet London was not happy with the warm reception Mboya received. Sarcasm was wielded in response. "Large sections of American do-gooders who feel a vacuum now that the British have stopped being nasty to the Irish, the Indians and the Israelis" have now turned to Africa. The recommendation in response was that a "sponsored speaker or two on this subject would be a good investment."[48] Rapidly a "secret" plan was put in motion to dispatch the urbane Sir Michael Blundell to the United States, "so that he may do something to counter the adverse propaganda Kenya expect[s] from Mboya's visit."[49]

Sir Michael had the requisite sarcasm to take on this task. As British colonialism was being compelled to withdraw, "every one of them," he said speaking of U.S. nationals, "is metaphorically rushing forward with a packet of tea in his hand to cast into the waves of the nearest seaport—Mombasa, Lagos or Dar es Salaam," in "emulation of the Boston Tea Party." He stressed, "Americans wish to pose as the friends of all undeveloped countries and those still under colonial rule. The British alliance with its conjunctions was embarrassing to them, and, coupled with their own emotions over the issue, led them further on the path of encouragement for nationalist movements than perhaps was wise."

Sir Michael was unsparing in his critique of Washington. He thought that since "they were competing with the Russians for support, they were anxious to direct attention away from their own racial problems and disorders. Curiously enough, although most Africans are aware of colour discrimination in America,

and a number of them have been exposed to it when on visits to the United States as guests . . . they do not seem to be disturbed by it." Naturally, he was contemptuous of Mboya, who he sought to undermine more than once. "Americans in their emotional way saw in him a projection of George Washington and overflowed with sympathy and help as a convenient method of demonstrating that the Negro Problem in their own country did not exist . . ."[50]

Now perceived as Washington's man, Mboya correspondingly was derided by those more friendly to the colonizing power. John Hatch of the British Labour Party chided him about criticisms he supposedly made about his organization[51] and upbraided the Kenyan leader because of his "suggestion that you would propose the policy of abolishing all communal seats, the creation of a common roll with universal adult suffrage and the exclusion of all reserved seats" for Europeans.[52]

The "open prosperity" of Mboya was alleged; it was "understood that Mboya had two new cars," had a new "house built" and he "carried . . . large sums of money" routinely.[53] While London and Nairobi were deriding him as a veritable puppet of the Yankees, a highly regarded British newspaper reported prominently the supposition from Cairo that he was actually a "British Stooge."[54]

For his part, Mboya was "thoroughly disgusted with the ICFTU and particularly her recent interference with the AFL-CIO programme." The European based ICFTU, he thought, "take us for granted," and—as he saw it—was willing to be manipulated against the U.S.-based federation.[55] London's TUC in turn found the Kenyan unions to be "in one hell of a mess" and Jim Bury of the U.S.-based Packinghouse Workers, who was sent to help these unions came in for his share of criticism from Britain too.[56]

Mboya also was seen as part of the problem by the TUC. "Tom is much too clever," was what a leader of the powerful Mombasa dockworkers' reputedly told them. "It is never possible to know what Tom is doing." Consider that the Luo labor leader "was an official of the Kenya African Union but he wasn't detained when everyone else was." "Surely you aren't suggesting that Tom was involved in Mau Mau?" was the response with the reply being a brisk laugh and the remark, "of course he was."[57] Since the ICFTU reportedly saw the entire idea of "Mau Mau" as a fabrication "deliberately exploited . . . to smash the young African trade union movement," this allegation about Mboya's reputed membership in "Mau Mau" was not intended as a compliment.[58]

Mboya lined up with Springer-Kemp, Randolph and the African American labor leaders that included George McCray against the ICFTU leadership and the TUC, perceived as much too protecting of the colonizers. As McCray saw it, these latter two groups, it is true, were "unequivocally opposed to the spread of Communism in Africa," which was admirable, "but they also dread and oppose the growth of American influence anywhere in [Africa] except Liberia, Egypt and perhaps Ethiopia," neither of which were colonies. As McCray viewed things, his "old CIO President, Walter Reuther" could hardly be trusted either on this matter of "independent action in the field of international affairs," perhaps because of his own differences with George Meany, the porkly and balding cigar-chomping plumber, and the top AFL-CIO leadership.[59]

The ICFTU strenuously objected to the AFL-CIO idea of training African trade unionists abroad—for example, in the United States. This was not because of fear of U.S. influence and advantage, said C.H. Millard, the ICFTU director of Organizing, but because when Nigerian laborers were sent to Britain for training, they joined management upon their return home. They "tended on the their return," also "to concern themselves more with political developments within their countries than with the trade union movement"; thus Meany's "decision to allocate $50,000 for work on Africa runs counter to [his]own policy of unreserved support for the ICFTU," particularly since U.S. labor "is the largest and one the wealthiest of all of our affiliates…" Kenya needed help—but not the kind Meany was proposing.[60]

George McCray begged to disagree with the ICFTU. "I am an American of African descent," he said proudly, "and the peculiar African American relationship which is represented in me as a person has never failed to arouse immediate interest," in Ghana where he was then on assignment for U.S. labor. Establishing his credentials further, he underscored that "my associations with labor leaders and their followers are constant and quite close," having "shared their beds or mats, ate their chop," and all the rest. "I am usually queried about 'the treatment of our people in the United States' " and "I have also emphasized the need for the two great branches of African people"—on the continent and in North America—"to develop as an organ of the free world." But the ICFTU, he thought, had done little to arrest Red advance. Thus, this Brussels-based entity should be pushed aside since "we"—meaning the United States—were "respected, trusted and admired" in "this part of the world.…Moreover, the Africans want to be associated with us…"[61]

Perhaps not surprisingly, at the moment when Mboya's popularity was ascending, an opponent rose at home to challenge him. He had developed potent enemies—in London, in Nairobi and even in the United States itself where his stern opposition to Jim Crow and stinging rebuke of the settler regime were not accepted favorably by all. Moreover, as to be expected, as the pieces on the chessboard were being repositioned with a sector in Washington beginning to turn a cold shoulder to the settler regime and wink enticingly at Mboya, while the United Kingdom and the United States seemed to be at odds, there was roiling flux and such can contribute to confusion and shifting stances and complex alliances.

Arthur Ochwada seemed to be an outgrowth of this process. Born in 1926, he joined the armed forces in 1943 and spent a year in Ceylon [Sri Lanka] and another in India in the highly politicized region of Bengal, then Assam. The rest of the time he was in British Somaliland, among indigenes with a militant reputation,[62] which did not apparently harm his ability to engage in fierce internal struggles.[63] Perhaps as a reflection of the tension between Meany and Reuther, Ochwada had been nominated for an AFL-CIO scholarship,[64] as the former might have decided that Mboya was much too close to the UAW and the Negro leadership. Ochwada, sensing the competition for the prize that he was, began bargaining with the TUC, requesting funds for a stay in London "since my financial position is not very sound to support myself." Thus, "per diem allowance for food and other expenses," along with "hotel accommodations and traveling allowances," and a

"family allowance which included my Nairobi house rents," would suffice nicely, said Ochwada.[65]

Just as Jay Lovestone was friendly toward Mboya, he was also friendly with his antagonist, Ochwada, who was assistant general secretary of the Kenya Federation of Labor that the Luo leader headed. "The Peking Radio," said the alert Lovestone, "recently announced that someone by the name of 'James Ochwata,' visiting delegate from Kenya and former Secretary General of the East African Trade Unions,' arrived in Peking. The Peking Radio also announced that 'the Chairman of the Uganda National Congress, Joseph Kiwanuka' arrived here. In our opinion this is a straight falsification and slander against you and an attempt to frame you," he said with a dollop of aggressiveness leavened with skepticism. "Are there people with similar names or are they mere fabrications?" he asked Ochwada anxiously. "Please let me hear [from] you about this typical Communist trick," he added with both bravado and anxiety.[66] But unlike Mboya, Ochwada was not the most determined correspondent, or, perhaps, he was playing a double game: "I simply cannot account for your not answering any of the letters which I have sent you," Lovestone told him with disgust.[67]

Ochwada, on the other hand, was not shy about conferring with U.S. diplomats in Nairobi who provided insight into "closed meetings" of the Accra confab.[68] It was Ochwada's proposed presence in Ghana that brought "friction" between him and Mboya, or so thought the TUC. "Ochwada seemed [bent] on going but Tom said there were expenses only for one," and it was not his deputy.[69] Irving Brown, close to both the AFL-CIO and U.S. intelligence, was also concerned about the perceived leftward drift in Africa and too held the Europeans responsible. This came clear to him during the 1958 Pan-Africanist meeting in Accra, where Mboya's appearance had so disturbed Smith Hempstone. More attuned to what was new, than what was decaying, Brown parted company with the settler regime and praised Mboya. He was also struck when "those at the conference kept saying that the American trade unions, especially Negro American trade unionists could be of tremendous influence"; so, though he assailed "reverse racialism"—which decades later was the term to be used to describe the affirmative action he was now advocating—he urged that "Maida Springer and also George McCray should be spending more time in Africa": indicative of how things had changed, African Americans once kept as far away as possible from the continent as a matter of policy were now being asked to ride to the rescue of U.S. interests. As for the ICFTU and TUC, Brown thought they had "lost great prestige," particularly in their contestation with Cairo and Conakry, which then seemed ascendant.[70]

Mboya was walking a tightrope: a consummate political operator, he was straining to maintain diplomatic relations with all sides, which was both appropriate for a struggling Kenya and helpful to his movement's parlous finances. So he "defended the ICFTU…strongly"—that was his "personal" message to Randolph, though "the ICFTU is not particularly effective in Africa…" He felt "forced to defend the ICFTU in Africa despite their attitude to us," which was not exactly favorable, thought Mboya. He backed the ICFTU in the face of protestations from "Guinea, Nigeria and Egypt" though this organization "spent…monies…in Asia, Europe and the Americas" to the detriment of Africa.[71] The ICFTU "record in East

and Central Africa is deplorable," said Mboya. When their "office was opened in Nairobi in 1954, the ICFTU representative constantly complained of the attitude in Brussels…" For example, "a van sent out as a gift to Kenya by the UAW in 1956 has never been used for the purpose for which it was meant. For about two years it has remained locked up in a garage, despite our protests," he said. "It was in fact converted into the personal property of the overseas ICFTU representative…"[72]

He swallowed his reservations about the ICFTU. He was not happy with the TUC either.[73] Mboya in turn sought to extend his cooperation with the United States, informing "Dear Jay" Lovestone, the veteran anticommunist operator that he was willing to make a "possible visit to the Far East" at his behest: "do write as often as you can," he said.[74]

Mboya and his Negro comrades were extending their tentacles into murky waters, becoming more valuable to the likes of Lovestone and Brown as a result: Springer-Kemp informed Mboya about her encounter "in Israel" with a "young Kenyan attending the Afro-Asian Seminar on Cooperatives…"[75] "My admiration for their government and their people is boundless," was her opinion of this settler state.[76] Mboya seemed to be developing a similar friendliness toward these same forces, informing "Dear Irving" Brown that he planned to visit there; Washington's satrap, Liberia, "was going to pay for my ticket to Monrovia," which would not be viewed kindly in Accra, where this state was seen as unfriendly.[77]

Liberia was lining up with the United States and, seemingly, Kenya, against Egypt and Ghana among others, as the latter pushed for a strong Pan-African labor grouping.[78] The "possibility of an independent Pan-African federation with all its consequent opportunities for Communist penetration," said a U.S. diplomat in Accra, "has for some time been a source of intermittent worry for the ICFTU…"[79]

Left unmentioned was how such a federation could have boosted the atrocious wages and working conditions that were the continent's hallmark. When one U.S. emissary visited Liberia, Ghana, Nigeria, Kenya, Uganda, Ethiopia and Tunisia in late 1958, suggestive of the continent's underdevelopment, "he did not see a sharp tool being used by the people…"[80] To be fair, there was much more that could have been done to improve African American wages too. When an Eisenhower emissary went to Accra, he noticed that a maid there received "$28 a month" and "takes care of five rooms," while her counterpart in Washington received "$40 a week" while attending to "sixteen" rooms at the posh Shoreham Hotel.[81] Given the considerably lower prices in Accra, arguably the African maid was better off than her hard-pressed African American peer.

As the settler regime saw things, it was they who were being pressed on all fronts, with even their erstwhile ally in Washington seeming to defect to the opposition. The palpable "threats," said Nairobi, included Communists, Arab nationalists, and Pan-Africanists, not to mention the Afro-Asian movement symbolized by Bandung. These were not "four distinct threats" but "must be considered cumulatively" since there was a "growing tendency toward co-ordination of effort in practice," suggested by a "Soviet tactic to support [the] other three…" China being a "wholly coloured nation that has thrown off a foreign—and white—yoke" was in a class by itself. The "Egyptians [had] launched [a] massive campaign in subversion and propaganda" through Cairo radio and this African

capital had begun to "shelter" a range of "nationalist groups . . . from most African territories," including Kenya. Unfortunately, the "immediate interests of [the] Sino-Soviet bloc and [Egypt]" coincided. There was a "tendency for individual Indians to forget their former [supposed] apparent distaste of Africans and to take part in African nationalist organizations in East and Central Africa [making them all] more dangerous. Several have strong Communist connections and [are] bound to exert influence disproportionate to their numbers . . ." Strikingly, this colonialist differentiated Pan-Africanism from other "threats"—perhaps mulling over Padmore's lurch toward anticommunism—since it was "in itself not necessarily hostile to British interests . . ."[82]

The problem for the settler regime was that their long-time backers in London and Washington were not necessarily united. For from the earliest stages of the State of Emergency—and certainly well before—Washington's representative in Nairobi recognized the numerous "instances where the U.S. and U.K. interests fail to parallel"[83]—and this undercurrent became a dominant theme as Washington took advantage of the momentum of Suez to twist the tail of the lion and compel London into a forced retreat from Empire.

But London also recognized that attitudes in the United States were not monolithic, as the Little Rock controversy surely demonstrated. It was at this juncture that London initiated an investigation of the "influence of the Southern States over the formation of U.S. policy at home and abroad." Dixie, it was reported, had "for long enjoyed far more influence over the formation of [U.S.] policy . . . than has been warranted by their intrinsic importance; and they, until fairly recently, exercised it in a manner generally favourable to our interests . . ." It was not clear how long this would last as Negroes were empowered. "The Negro Question has also had an important bearing on the South's attitude," in "consequence, they are more hesitant than other Americans to criticize other countries' behaviour. In particular, they are relatively unconcerned by Colonial problems," because "they are accustomed, unconsciously at least, to the idea of one race dominating another, and do not, like other Americans, regard it as something inherently evil."[84] As during the U.S. Civil War, there were powerful interests, most notably abroad, who seemed to have a material interest in the perpetuation of the more horrific aspects of white supremacy.

Unsurprisingly, when it seemed as if the United States was stepping away from Jim Crow, voices in Kenya began to complain. As the UAW became one of Mboya's biggest boosters, *The Nation*, one of Nairobi's leading organs, charged that this union was a hypocrite, allowing discrimination against its Negro members in the former Slave South.[85] This was inaccurate complained Victor Reuther in return.[86] The columnist in question begged to differ[87] citing the words of the venerable A. Philip Randolph in *TIME*[88] to substantiate his viewpoint. When Walter Reuther began to carp about British colonialism in Africa, Leslie McDonnell of Vancouver, British Columbia, sought to "draw your attention to conditions in your own Southland, also to the fact that Uncle Sam has not led an altogether blameless life," pointing to the Panama Canal and the seizure of Texas among other shameful incidents.[89]

The Nairobi press also took umbrage when Mboya received funds from the AFL-CIO. "The Yankee dollar," wheezed the *Sunday Post*, did "represent all

the filth and lack of civilization revealed by the McClellan Committee which is investigating American trade unionism"—which was a "racket. It is proved to be synonymous with murder, graft, thuggery, extortion…"[90] Mboya thoughtfully sent Meany a newspaper clipping that chided the AFL-CIO and the Democratic Party, both of which—it was said—in the most recent election in November 1958 "did not because of their fear of the Southern Democratic opinion, make 'civil rights' a real campaign issue," yet these hypocrites take a different view in Kenya, noting the gifts to Mboya: "I wonder if there is any likelihood of a similar gift to the Negroes of Little Rock?" it was asked acerbically.[91]

Yet ironically giving weight to these assaults was the view expressed by the influential U.S. columnist, Victor Riesel, a man who was quite close to labor leaders, who objected strongly to the funding of Mboya by the AFL-CIO since his organization "is the backbone of the African political movements which want to drive out the whites"; to "sum it up," he averred, "the settler and government point of view is: why don't American labor leaders stay out of their affairs?"[92] Agreeing was Sir Ferdinand Cavendish-Bentinck, a regime leader, who accused the United States repeatedly of interfering in Kenyan affairs, mentioning the ACOA and AFL-CIO specifically: "he added," said the U.S. man in Nairobi speaking of Sir Ferdinand, "that the European generally did not like to see money flowing into the colony for the use of the African nationalists…"[93]

The rapturous welcome accorded Mboya in the United States led directly to the settler regime castigating Washington for its apparent hypocrisy. Speaking in early 1960, the consul general in Nairobi reported disgustedly that "today's *East African Standard* is a real humdinger," with articles "dealing with the racial difficulties in the South over the color [bar]," while "yesterday's… was almost as bad," with an "item on the Nationalist Chinese Consul General in San Francisco who is having difficulty moving into a white neighborhood. An item reporting [Nigeria's] Dr. Azikiwe's television criticism of the [United States'] 'moral abdication'," and an "anti-American letter as usual was published"—both excoriating. "The anti-American editorial bias of the paper which is considered East Africa's most responsible newspaper and taken almost as a Bible by a large segment of the population,"[94] was tarnishing tremendously U.S. prestige—or alternatively, pushing the United States to abolish its horrendous Jim Crow practices.

Yet, when the UAW and like forces chose to speak out about colonialism in Africa, the door was opened to an assault on its own questionable practices—all of which operated to the advantage of the much beleaguered Negro. Mboya rose to the defense of his U.S. allies,[95] whose energies on his behalf were driven in part by the fear of Communists, but his defense also solidified an anticolonial, pro-equality front that was to redound to the benefit of Africans and African Americans alike. The problem was that after the immediate goals of independence and civil equality had been reached, the subsequent question of redistribution of the wealth had been undermined not least because this laudable and necessary objective had become intertwined with the goals of the frightful Communists.

14

A New Frontier—in Africa?

"I first met Mr. Kennedy," said Tom Mboya speaking of the recently slain U.S. president, "in 1959" at "Asilomar on the West Coast near San Francisco, we found a lot of interest in each other almost immediately." This friendliness was vindicated when Kennedy's foundation provided ample funding for an airlift of young men and women from Kenya to the United States in order to study in colleges and universities. Mboya then visited the Kennedy compound in Hyannis Port, Massachusetts, and amid the graceful affluence of Cape Cod the two sophisticated politicians hammered out a deal whereby a hefty $100,000 would be donated for this edifying purpose. Kennedy wished this donation to "remain very private" (he had yet to be elected president). With JFK's ascension, concluded Mboya, "it was the beginning of a completely new era in our foreign relations with America,"[1] what a Kennedy booster could well term a "New Frontier in Africa."

With Bandung, Suez, then the rise of an independent Africa signaled by Ghana—all occurring in the context of a changed role for African Americans marked by Little Rock—it was clear that U.S. policy toward colonialism would have to change dramatically. The United States was scrambling to adapt as well because of the perceived challenge from Moscow, which—for example—had its own scholarship program for young Africans (later symbolized by the establishment of Patrice Lumumba University in Moscow). Mboya was able to play effectively on these contradictions, though his increasing closeness to Washington left him dangerously exposed at home where memories of this nation's sweeping white supremacy and closeness to the settler regime were not easy to forget.

On the other hand, it would have been difficult for any Kenyan leader of Mboya's prominence to ignore the real benefits emerging from a close relation with one of the affluence and power of Kennedy, particularly after the backing and filling of the Eisenhower years. Vice President Nixon—who the Administration termed the "father" of their "new policy on Africa," designed to respond to new conditions, had some decidedly old ideas, including the claim that there had been a "tendency . . . to underestimate the seriousness of the Communist threat in Africa." In a novel approach, "the Vice President predicted the Communists will clothe themselves in Islamic, racist, anti-racist or nationalist clothing."[2]

Unfortunately, lack of insight was not solely a product of the fevered imagination of the insecure and anticommunist vice president. At one meeting of Eisenhower's select National Security Council, one participant "noted that radio is now having a great influence on the natives, who listen mostly to Radio Cairo and Radio Brazzaville," while "no one listened to the Voice of America…" His remedy? He was "forced to conclude that the best thing for the area would be a plan which did not grant independence for twenty-five years," which—ironically and perversely—would have been 1984.[3] Another bright idea discussed was developing "a Free World 'Monroe Doctrine' for Africa as a means of curbing Communist Bloc influence."[4]

The stirring of Africans was of concern since U.S. interests in British Africa were growing. Thus, in search of newer thinking Eisenhower commissioned a report on foreign economic policy for Africa South of the Sahara, which was a recognition that this continent had not been given the attention it merited, despite—or perhaps because of—the attention given to the settler regime in Nairobi. Most likely, this increased attention to non-Kenya Africa, reduced whatever diminishing leverage held by the Nairobi regime for it deflected attention toward other regions as it helped to convince that the future of this regime was unclear at best.

This was reflected in the commission's predicate that "only Ethiopia and possibly Somalia in the north and the Union of South Africa have security importance at this time"—Kenya was unmentioned. It was also emphasized that "in some areas, American corporations have embarrassed our international relationships by practicing racial segregation"—which could easily be interpreted as a slap at Nairobi.

The president's hand-picked emissary, Clarence Randall made his way to Southern Rhodesia, a segregationist colony similar to Kenya.[5] It was "estimated" by the Administration that "American private capital totaling 25,000,000 [pounds] has been invested" in the Rhodesias and Nyasaland up to 1956, practically all of this money went into mining and most of it into copper mining, though chrome, asbestos and lithium have attracted substantial sums. There was also "an abundance of unskilled labor obtainable from the African reservations," who had "proven to be excellent factory workers," not necessarily good news for U.S. workers who might come into competition with them but excellent news for those that employed them. Yet the "fear of eventual racial troubles must be some impediment for investment," it was said, though "more symptoms of potential trouble" were "evident in Northern Rhodesia and in Nyasaland than in Southern Rhodesia"; the problem for Nairobi was that unrest in the region tended to spread like a new fad, as suggested by the bunches of nations that surged into independence in 1960, then 1963.[6]

Hence, the White House could not be indifferent to problems in the Rhodesias that could easily be manifested in Kenya. When journalist Victor Riesel, arrived in Salisbury in 1959, he was surprised to find Hollywood movies starring June Allyson and Ann Sheridan in theatres, indicative of the popularity of U.S. cinema in the region (in Kenya he had noticed the film *Johnny Belinda* starring the ex-spouse of Ronald Reagan, Jane Wyman and *Jeanne Eagels* featuring the latest

blonde bombshell, Kim Novak; he also pointed out that "the natives like action films" but "when the paleface is killing the Indian, that's not so great because the Africans identify with the primitive side…").[7] Thus, when Julius Nyerere of Dar es Salaam threatened a boycott of Hollywood movies exhibited in the region by South African companies, due to their racist policies, he was taken quite seriously. "We are sick of contributing money to the South African government to buy guns to shoot our brothers and sisters," he was reported as declaring. Tantalizingly, Nyerere provided a comfortable exit for Hollywood—as he sent a shot over the bow at regional racist regimes—suggesting that "distributors in America…handle their firms through an East African firm."[8]

As so often happened, the idea then spread to Salisbury, as "Asian and Colored communities" were "loaded for bear" when it came to segregated movie-houses, which were controlled by U.S. interests and allowed "separate toilet facilities."[9] Clarence Randall was quite concerned about the impact of these events.[10] This "had a profound and detrimental effect on the standing of the United States in that part of Africa," he said, "and it will be a long time, in my opinion, before these effects have been overcome…"[11] But Washington had to then confront a powerful and politically connected U.S. company, Twentieth Century Fox, which was loath to challenge domestic norms that might compromise their short-term profit-making. "We must be extremely cautious in handling this racial question," said a company official in Johannesburg, "and we [do] not think it wise for our interests to do anything that may be interpreted as introducing alien policies and disregarding local government and custom. We would rather have the Government work with us," it was added piously, "than the few that think conditions such as they exist…can be changed overnight."[12]

Foggy Bottom was upset that the chief executive of this Hollywood firm, Spyrous Skouras, was so "shortsighted" and was "not yet prepared to do anything about" the problem.[13] Skouras was unapologetic.[14] Washington, which quite rightly, had a broader view of U.S. interests—beyond a quarterly profit report—then had to consider postponing a Navy cruise to Africa, slated for a stop in Dar es Salaam,[15]—not the desired message at that time. Randall concurred.[16] When Randall suffered a mild heart attack and wound up convalescing from coronary thrombosis, it was unclear to what extent his anxious reaction to the policy dilemmas he had to confront had driven his predicament.[17]

Kenya was proving to be an ever larger problem with every passing day, for as Africans marched toward liberation, policies and norms that theretofore had not seemed controversial, now were serving as a hindrance to the execution of U.S. foreign policy. This was not what Nairobi wanted to hear.

Yet, Nairobi was not blind and could see that there remained a powerful lobby—and influences—in the United States on their behalf. At the same time that complaints were emerging from the State Department about segregation in Salisbury, this same agency chose to hold a major conference of their personnel in Africa and Europe in—of all places—the capital of colonized Mozambique. Thus, rather than focus on the anticolonial demand, the environment almost demanded they reassure the colonizer.[18]

Washington was pounding for entrance on an open door: they knew—or should have known—that what was at issue was not driving the European into the sea but ending colonial rule by Europeans. The former idea was just a way to stoke hysteria to bar the latter inevitability. Time at this Mozambique meeting would have been better spent contemplating what Washington knew was one of their chief challenges: how to deal with Nkrumah's Ghana, particularly its ambition to forge a continental trade union federation. In addition to the lingering disputes involving Kenya between the AFL-CIO and ICFTU and between Mboya and Ochwada, could be added another: that between Mboya and Nkrumah—at least that was Washington's view. The two symbolized the radically different range of choices faced by the United States in the wake of Suez, for a few years earlier Mboya would have been ignored but now he was a de facto and ironic "Great Black Hope." Nkrumah, on the other hand, who had invited Du Bois and Hunton to reside in his newly liberated nation, then had provided exile to scores of other radically inclined African Americans, while maintaining warm diplomatic relations with both Moscow and Peking, was seen as a haunting nightmare.

Thus, after his triumphal journey to the United States, an official report declared that "Mboya is convinced that Nkrumah wants to be the acknowledged leader of Pan-Africanism and will brook no competition from leaders elsewhere in Africa." Particularly upsetting was the Ghanaian's invitation to Mboya's left-wing Kenyan foil, Oginga Odinga to Accra, which was "seen by Mboya as an attempt to replace [him] as the representative of the East African territories." Reportedly, "Mboya chuckled when he made this comment," just as—according to Washington—"Mboya and Nyerere have been corresponding with Nkrumah in a highly critical vein…"[19]

Supposedly there was a "coolness" between the Kenyan and the Ghanaian.[20] Repetitively, Washington warned of their "rivalries."[21] After speaking with Mboya, a U.S. diplomat reported that "Nkrumah [was] critical [of] Mboya because he thinks latter [was] too much under American influence."[22] These analyses of the Mboya-Nkrumah relationship have to be accepted with caution for when the Kenyan was being tormented by the settler regime, it was Nkrumah who rallied to his defense and dispatched an attorney to assist him.[23] Still, it was hard to deny that there was a growing perception that the overwhelming response Mboya had received in the United States had branded him irrevocably as Uncle Sam's favorite nephew. The conscience of the Kenyan left, Oginga Odinga, spoke of Mboya contemptuously as the "American Boy."[24] Likewise, it was clear that Ghanaian trade unionists were not as enamored of the United States, as Mboya apparently was.[25]

A defensive Mboya sought to rebut this perception. How dare they, Mboya said challengingly, since "while in the United States I did not hesitate to condemn the U.S. Government's foreign policy when they failed to take a firm stand on colonial issues, on Algeria, Kenya, Nyasaland, the Portuguese territories," and the settler regimes. "I was equally critical," he insisted, "of their race policy in the South which undermined the U.S. moral right and capacity to champion freedom and equality."[26]

The latter was precisely the point. Suez and related issues had deepened a rift between Washington and its European allies and helped to push the United

States toward an Africa policy that led to the embrace of Mboya. But this new policy was not without cost. It exacerbated sectional tensions that a century previously had eventuated in Civil War and, more directly, it worsened relations with settlers in Kenya who felt they had been stabbed in the back by a regime in Washington on which they had come to rely. They struck back fiercely, charging Washington with rank hypocrisy for condemning policies in Nairobi that then existed in Nashville. This in turn caused the United States to accelerate the post–Little Rock policy of steadily moving away from Jim Crow.

Yet Washington retreated under heavy fire from Nairobi. There was "more vice, crime and degeneracy" in the United States "than [in] any [nation] since the days of Nero," one settler asserted.[27] "The example of Little Rock needs no space here," said another; "there are over 250,000 coloured people in Britain enjoying rights without any colour bar," in contrast, it was alleged. "This we feel is the only correct moral attitude to adopt. It is sheer hypocrisy for the USA to attempt to persuade us in Africa to do what they cannot achieve in their own country."[28] Margaret Chapman of Nairobi asserted vigorously, "the average American does not know the difference between East, West and South Africa…" C.C. Sandys-Lumsdaine declared sarcastically, "I read…that America is sending books on democracy in East Africa. These publications will presumably explain how and where to lay down a Mason-Dixon line." Another wag quipped, "remember that 'those who live in glasshouses should not throw Little Rocks.'"[29]

The settler press virtually declared war on Washington. Their view of the United States as a "crew-cut and crackpot culture," complained the head of the Africa desk at the State Department, was reaching the depths of absurdity and was all the more revolting since the accuser knew the accused so well. One contributor attributed "high per capita milk consumption in the [United States] to our (national) Freudian breast complex!" Fortunately, the U.S. diplomat, C. Vaughan Ferguson, did not shirk reality, observing cogently, "I am aware that Suez must have done a lot to rekindle anti-U.S. feeling"; he was aware that there were a "large number of ex-military men among your vocal Europeans." But Ferguson also knew that this process of decolonization was also having impact on the United States itself: "there are some times," he said, again accurately, "when we *are* vulnerable" and "I'm thinking now of the current lunch-counter problems in the South…"[30]

Moreover, Washington's strategy of forging a moderate bloc that included Mboya and anchored by their neo-colony, Liberia—sufficiently close to Ghana to give Nkrumah sleepless nights—was not congealing for reasons similar to those causing ructions with the settler regime in Nairobi. Monrovia was complaining—per usual—about racism by the U.S. businesses that dominated its fragile economy.[31] Clarence Randall acknowledged that "American companies in Liberia, namely Firestone and Republic" have not behaved well, especially Firestone; "they do not maintain the social amenities with the Liberians, and practice segregation to such a point that anti-segregation laws with teeth in them have been passed, and our prestige through Africa has been compromised…"[32]

And even if Mboya and his comrades did not pay attention to West Africa they could only look to a close neighbor—Ethiopia—and a close cousin in Pretoria to

wonder about what it meant to be a U.S. ally. Though the United States maintained a strategically important base in Eritrea, the Ethiopian province whose infrastructure had been bolstered during the Italian occupation, His Imperial Majesty in Addis Ababa provided a useful model for Kenyans to emulate in that he did not kowtow and bow to Washington. Secretary of State Christian Herter acknowledged that his government was "in real trouble" with the Lion of Judah since the United States backed London's idea of joining British Somaliland with Somalia which Addis Ababa hotly opposed. Eisenhower was worried about the strategic Red Sea, however, and agreed that a divided Somali nation created too many opportunities for mischief. Signaling his ignorance of the continent whose fate he was helping to settle, the president said he was unfamiliar with Somalia and asked what it was like—did it have jungles, for example? His advisor grasped the nettle unsteadily and responded, "the Somali women were said to be the most beautiful in Africa," many of whom could be found in Kenya.[33]

Clarence Randall was unsure what to make of the fact that the "favorites" of the emperor included India—viewed suspiciously in Washington because of its closeness to the Soviet Union and the liberation forces in Kenya—and that at social occasions the emperor "converses in French," the language of a prickly ally. Plus, "the Yugoslavs" were "fairy close" to him, which was not assuring given their prominence at Bandung. Yet the pathetic state of the Ethiopian economy suggested that the payoff for a pro-U.S. alignment was paltry. Randall found that the "Emperor owns nearly every enterprise in the country and much of the land" and "in parts of [Ethiopia] the yield of the land per acre is among the lowest in the world…"[34]

The sister of the secretary of state, Eleanor Lansing Dulles, was also appalled by the poverty of Ethiopia. Though she found His Imperial Majesty most friendly and gracious, she was stunned by the "contrast between the pomp of the Palace and the poverty of the people…" She too was disturbed to find a "varied, many-sided Communist effort of overt and covert nature"; they were notably "active in the countryside"—where the bulk of Ethiopians resided—"showing films…" Amazingly, she thought, "the Emperor and most of his Cabinet really believe the Soviets are currently doing more for Ethiopia than the United States…" She ascertained a "touch of hostility" when this matter was broached. The thought may have occurred in Washington that Africans were not willing to endorse wholly the U.S. stance during the Cold War. Moscow was planting seeds, concentrating on the education of students where the Oromo plurality was centered, quite close to the Kenyan border, and was winning more adherents by "bringing religious potentates from Jerusalem to Addis and taking two Bishops to Moscow."[35]

In Somalia, also on the Kenyan border, the Consul General John McGrath found the country to be "Western in its orientation but definitely not anti-Soviet," which was worrying. Reportedly, an ecumenical "Russian representative… encouraged Somalia to take all the aid it can get from the United States." This was less startling than the Consul's conclusion, which if followed, would have destabilized the Cold War: "It would help in Africa," he said, "for the United States to be less violently anti-Russian."[36]

The lesson that Washington should have drawn from its investigation of Kenya's neighbors was that the United States had a steep uphill climb to win over Africans familiar with the slave trade, Jim Crow, and this nation's all too recent embrace of despised settler regimes. Moscow did not carry such weighted baggage and had the advantage of having advocates such as Nkrumah and Robeson on its side. That the settler regime echoed this disparaging of Moscow probably convinced indigenes that there was something positive about Communists if it engendered such fear and hatred among the enemies of Africans. Even an Eisenhower emissary was unimpressed by the leadership he encountered in Salisbury, acknowledging implicitly that racism played a central role in their selection, which bid not bode well for the future. Visiting Salisbury, Clarence Randall "made a courtesy call on Governor-General Lord Dalhousie. He was dreadful. Cordial enough and all that old chap but not an idea per day. Doesn't matter, though, old thing for he is a relative of the Royal Family. His aide, Lord Somebody, of twenty years, was a second edition, only more vapid…" Sensing the changing tides, Randall reminded his colleagues back home, "by the way, that word native should never pass one's lips over here. The word is African…"[37]

Thus, as they espied U.S. policy on their borders and toward similarly situated regimes, anticolonial Kenyans had reason to be concerned. Though Washington had seemed to embrace Mboya, it was well-known that the powerful pro-Jim Crow sector in the United States was not so inclined. Kenyans were being encouraged to turn their backs on Moscow and their allies—Nkrumah and Du Bois—though Ethiopia and Somalia apparently had not, which had caused no penalty of substance to be inflicted upon them. This set of circumstances paved the way for a move away from the cautious conservatism of the Eisenhower years to the cautious liberalism of the "New Frontier."

But shoots of this new direction were apparent even before the November 1960 presidential election in the United States. When Sir Michael Blundell contemplated a visit to the United States to counter the jubilant welcome accorded Mboya, Washington—which had routinely hosted leaders of the regime over the years—hesitated. "I greatly fear," said one U.S. emissary, "that the appearance of Blundell at the same time [as Mboya's visit] could only lead to acrimony and [mis]understanding among large segments of our population…" Why? "Africa is rapidly becoming a domestic political issue in this country," he proclaimed and "we will find both parties next year competing with respect to support of African nationalism"; thus, "under these circumstances a rebuttal by an European Kenyan, no matter how liberal will be doomed to failure."[38]

The highly unstable fluctuations sparked by the shifting of U.S. policy in response to Bandung, Suez, Little Rock, Sputnik, and Ghanaian independence, followed by Mboya's euphoric reception in the United States, served to undermine the settler regime. In 1945 Springer-Kemp recalled that in her nation's capital, "I could not be given a room in the hotel with the rest of my colleagues—all white," while "no white cab driver would accept me as a passenger. Not even the most nondescript coffee shop would serve me"[39]—yet now she was consorting with powerbrokers globally, who were seeking her counsel. This new correlation of forces was to lead to the pre-independence release of Kenyatta, who

now had to contend with Mboya—at least internationally—as the face of anti-colonialism. This simultaneously led to talks in 1960 in London concerning a new dispensation for Kenya, with the regime pushing for a kind of "settler-lite" dominance and indigenes generally pushing for something far more sweeping. Also making an appearance was the NAACP leader and future high court judge, Thurgood Marshall, who was advising the indigenes and traveled to Nairobi to consult with Mboya,[40] days after the formal ending of the State of Emergency in January 1960.[41]

Washington, which did not oppose Marshall's participation, was vindicated when a U.S. official observed that "during [the] Kenya conference Thurgood Marshall played [a] helpful constructive role"—"highest praise for his activities" was accorded.[42] Marshall later speculated that the CIA may have funded his intervention and the most extensive analysis of this episode asserts that this was probably so. Marshall was bewildered by the recalcitrance of the settlers he encountered, terming the lily-white "United Party" as no different from the Ku Klux Klan "in its heyday"—it made the Klan "look like a Sunday School picnic. [They] were real rabid, awful." In turn, Odinga was not pleased with Marshall's participation, sensing—not incorrectly—that this was designed to provide support for Mboya's own initiatives in Kenya. But what was most striking is that unlike Robeson or Du Bois, Marshall pushed aggressively in these talks for the protection of settler rights. "It may seem a puzzling irony that for this champion of African American rights, a focus in Kenya was protection of the rights of privileged white people," argues one scholar.[43] Marshall's "key contribution to the Kenyan Constitution," according to another analyst, "was to make it illegal for the government to claim [property] belonging to white settlers without paying for it."[44] Actually, considering that Du Bois and Robeson would certainly have pushed in a different direction than the path pursued by Marshall, which would have led ineluctably to challenging "the rights of privileged white people" elsewhere, including in North America, the fact that the NAACP leader was the African American presence in London is not so "puzzling" after all.

Despite his service to Washington, Robert Ruark was displeased with Marshall. The novelist hoped that a man of the noted attorney's "intelligence might recognize what sort of taka-taka you were mixed up with in what was laughingly called a Conference in London. For your information, 'taka-taka' in Swahili means 'trash' of rather a low order."[45] An irate Marshall fired back, though his aim was unsure: "you charge me with lumping myself with 'an avowed pro-Mau Mau"; well, he replied, "I trust you realize that you are charging me with voluntarily associating with an avowed criminal" and "you say that I urged 'revolt.' This is a deliberate falsehood" for Marshall called for no such thing.[46]

Yet ungrateful settlers were not happy with Marshall's handiwork either, seeing it—despite its flaws—as one more retreat by colonialism. Howard Williams reverted to Lincoln, who he said, remarked on signing the Emancipation Proclamation that "within twenty years we can peacefully colonize the Negro and give him our language, literature, religion and system of government under conditions in which he can rise to the full measure of manhood. This he can never do here. We can never attain the ideal union our fathers dreamed." Though

it was unclear who would serve the canapés and empty the trash if Kenyan indigenes were deported, he plunged on in a futile attempt to unmask Washington. "In a world which today reeks of American influence, that at least illuminates *au fond* the view of the citizen in the USA. What is of interest is that the policy on which America is working today is just that internally. It is not widely realized," he said with a smidgen of victory, "that America, despite everything, for her 180 million people has not yet allowed a black man, I am told, to enter the Senate, and has as yet put up only 18 blacks in the House of Representatives to represent some 18 million of their fellows, or one for a million, most of whom are reserved for the menial tasks. The [United States]," he stressed, "is not a good example of democracy. Further, many of their states are far from democratic in that they seriously restrict the vote only to the white man. Indeed," he added, turning the knife, "that is where, say some, South Africa got the idea of partition. Who can deny these facts?" he cried. "The weak are ever at the mercy of the strong," he said cynically. "Are we in Africa to lead the African or not?" Seeking to appeal to his fellow reactionaries in Washington, he emphasized their mutuality, noting that "Kenya must be treated as a martial base for the West, and in trust not only for the African but for humanity…"[47]

This settler's inured cynicism could not halt the retreat of colonialism. Marshall's very presence in London was further evidence—if any were needed—that a "new frontier" in Kenya now had been breached, and, the same could be said for the United States in that cynicism aside, the United States ultimately had to respond to Williams' bold assertions.[48] London had been forced to dial back on its dreams of Empire and the logical inheritor of its bounty, Washington, was being forced—not least because of its own waning white supremacist ambitions—to retreat from the settler regime. Hence, in March 1960 the U.S. secretary of state was informed about "panic among the European settlers" that had emerged "since the London conference." There were "rumors" of a "mass exodus" and "panic inquiries." The Consulate in Nairobi was being bombarded "concerning immigration into the United States."[49]

Thus, as it became clearer that settler power would have to recede, Venn Fey, who had received the Military Cross for bravery in fighting "Mau Mau," sought to sell his 2000 acre farm near Mount Kinangop for $42,000, so that he could start a new job as a game warden in the Catskill Mountains of New York.[50] Alternatively, when the regime began to place added pressure on Mboya, Congressman James G. O'Hara objected, as he was prodded by Willie Baxter, vice president of the Trade Union Leadership Council of Detroit.[51]

Thus, a new situation was developing: just as the late-eighteenth-century struggle in North America rapidly moved from "home rule" to "who shall rule at home, " something similar occurred in Kenya. The sniping that had emerged earlier between Mboya and his deputy, Ochwada, reemerged—except the fire was more intense, since the stakes were now greater.

For it was not only power that was at stake—that rare thing: leadership of an independent nation—but the money that went along with it. Early in 1960 William Schnitzler on behalf of the AFL-CIO acknowledged his group's "donation of $21,000 to [the] Kenya Federation of Labor—which supplements the initial

$35,000 granted," which Randolph had delivered a few years earlier: this would "cover cost of complete construction of their new headquarters building."[52] Strikingly, at the same time the British TUC contributed a measly 750 pounds to Kenyan workers for the purchase of furniture for the building.[53] How could the TUC expect realistically to compete with U.S. labor in Africa for the hearts and minds—and pockets—of unions?

With such sums and resultant power at stake, it seemed that the squabbling between Mboya and Ochwada intensified. "You in fact," said Mboya accusingly to his opponent, "stated you would try to destroy me internationally"[54]—but what about at home? "Internationally" was a thinly veiled reference to the acclaim and momentum Mboya had attained due to his association with the rising superpower in Washington.

The rise of Mboya also proved to be a boon for those Negro leaders in the United States with whom he had close contact. The AFL-CIO had given Randolph, leader of railway porters, the honor of delivering their largesse to Mboya, which was a rare privilege for a man in a declining industry in a union that was on the ropes. When the ACOA had asked Randolph for a donation to their efforts, he had to decline because of his union's decline.[55] Now with the increased interest in Africa, Randolph—and others, Marshall, for example—were positioned to grab headlines and accept the opportunity for junkets abroad.

Thus, a symbiotic relation had developed between these Africans and African Americans. Mboya seemed to be the winning horse—not Ochwada—and that is the horse they chose to ride. Hence, Ochwada felt compelled to complain about "the manner in which" Randolph's union comrade, Milton Webster, "treated" him, which was offending; Ochwada was disgusted, telling Randolph directly, "I have been much more mistreated by my own coloured brothers and sisters than any other people."[56] Ochwada then became embroiled in intrigue, passing on an allegedly forged document to the U.S. Consulate in Nairobi that posited a sharp U.S.-European conflict in the local trade union movement. The alleged British document averred that Washington wanted to manipulate the "difficult situation in which the United Kingdom and other European powers find themselves and to replace their influence and interests by direct U.S. penetration *using the machinery of ICFTU*," via the AFL-CIO. The purported document went on to say that "Americans are not interested in the creation of . . . genuine [African] trade unions as we know them. America had no Labour Party. Her trade union movement has been built from above . . ." Mboya was assailed since "it seems clear that they [the United States] have in effect reached some private arrangement with Mboya not only politically but probably personally and even financially . . ." Concluding, it was stressed, "*the American trade unions should cease their attacks on colonialism*" and "action should be taken against the further development of African trade union autonomy . . ."[57] [emphasis-original]

As an attorney might say, what was critical in these pages was not necessarily the truth of the matters asserted but the state of mind it represented: for it was evident that there was a rift between Ochwada and Mboya, between the British TUC and the AFL-CIO and between London and Washington. Soon a shoe dropped,

as Mboya was reporting triumphantly to Randolph about Ochwada's expulsion from the Kenya Federation of Labor.[58] "I cannot say that I am too greatly disappointed or surprised," Randolph replied; "in fact, it was Maida [Springer-Kemp] who expressed grave doubts about Ochwada's future in the labor movement," which was "woman's intuition."[59]

Ochwada, who seemingly had developed the requisite anti-Sovietism to appeal to U.S. unionists,[60] chose not to disappear quietly. His background was with the construction workers and, appropriately, he sought methodically to construct a case against his adversary.[61] Then he turned on the AFL-CIO who—he alleged—felt "that without Mboya nothing can be done not only in the Kenya labour movement but in the whole of Africa…"[62]

Negro leadership and the AFL-CIO had sided with Mboya and turned on Ochwada, a turnabout from recent times when he and Springer-Kemp had actually traveled together,[63] while he had enjoyed "frank and detailed discussion with Brother Randolph."[64]

Ochwada would not relent. "The USA is earning a bad reputation in this country," he contended: "you have overplayed your hand," he groused: "I hate to turn friendship into hate," he said with menace, "but I like to be frank with friends"; hence, he threatened Springer-Kemp: "If Kenya turned red," he warned, "it could be no one else to blame except AFL-CIO and USA…"[65]

Springer-Kemp was irate, mustering her ire to declare, "you, more than any other trade unionist in Kenya, except Tom, were close to American labor's concern and efforts on behalf of the KFL…" Well, she ended triumphantly, "was it blackmail when you pressed for and got an American labor scholarship for 9–10 months?"[66] The ouster of Ochwada, which had been preceded by the successful AFL-CIO effort to gain dominance in the leadership councils of the ICFTU[67] augmented Mboya's already formidable strength.

Ochwada's break with the Negro leadership placed him in a disadvantageous position when the settler regime chose to crackdown on him. In 1962 Springer-Kemp was informed that he was enduring "troubles. He was arrested the other day just as he was about to leave for Somalia with Jomo Kenyatta and other members of KANU, the party in which Ochwada holds the post of Deputy General Secretary" and was "faced with something like 11 charges of forgery, issuing forged cheques and theft"; the authorities "nabbed him as he was about to board the plane."[68] He was convicted and imprisoned.[69]

Things did not work out well for Mboya in the long-term either but in the short run he—and Kenyans—reaped some benefits from his ever closer ties to Washington. The payoff escalated when a massive airlift of young Kenyans to the United States—to which John F. Kennedy had contributed so generously—began. It was months after Mboya's return from his triumphal tour to the United States that Springer-Kemp was informed, "here is the list of Kenya students which I promised you"—a list that included "Barrack [*sic*] H. Obama," slated for the "University of Hawaii."[70] The attempt to educate indigenes was a profound breakthrough and a turnabout from a policy expressed only a few years earlier by Senator William Jenner who had wondered about the efficacy of educating Africans. Times had changed. A new frontier had been reached.

The gregarious Mboya had paved the way for this important venture for it was he who had made friends with William X. Scheinman, who was as youthful as the Kenyan leader and also, like him, had made his mark, serving as head of Arnav Industries, which manufactured aircraft components. Mboya got on supremely well with U.S. nationals who he generally found to be less hidebound and stuffy than their feudally bound British counterparts. Certainly his relationships with figures like Kennedy and Scheinman—not to mention the UAW and AFL-CIO—showed his outsized ability to tap the wealth of individuals and organizations in the United States.[71]

Mboya was building upon the past since despite the vigorous opposition of many settlers, U.S. nationals were able over the years to contribute to the Jeanes School in Kenya.[72] By 1959 a boxing coach from the United States visited this school, instructing students in the manly arts.[73] U.S. nationals also brought indigenes to the United States for study with Molonkett Ole Sempele, a Masai, arriving in 1908—as a result of missionary efforts—to attend theology schools in Virginia and North Carolina. Inspired by his experiences he returned to his homeland and split from white missionary mentors to found what may have been the first independent African church in Kenya. His attitude toward "White Christianity" changed dramatically when he heard of the lynching of hundreds of Negro Christians by white supremacists. The Phelps-Stokes foundation of the United States established a school near the same time in Kenya where copies of Garvey's newspaper could be found. It was there that Mboya completed his studies and took his first steps to becoming a union leader. It was the seeming connection between African American missionaries and education and indigene militancy that caused the settler regime to respond by trying to simply slam the door shut in their face and bar all Negroes.[74]

The dam broke in 1959, the year of Mboya's pathbreaking visit. For it was during that year that eighty-one Kenyans departed for the United States for higher education due to scholarship funds raised by Mboya. The leading lights of Black America—Harry Belafonte, Sidney Poitier, and Jackie Robinson—also backed this effort arguing that educational opportunities were "nonexistent under the repressive colonial system"—an allegation denied stoutly by London and confirmed by Mboya.[75] Robinson, who got deeply involved in this effort, later claimed, "I have had few more rewarding experiences in my entire life."[76]

This was not altruism altogether since, again, Cold War pressures were not absent in this educational decision. The Kenyan physician, Dr. Mungai Njoroge had been educated at Stanford before decamping to Kings County Hospital in New York, then Columbia University before starting a clinic in Kenya, which by 1960, said this leading medic proudly, had "become the single largest one doctor clinic in this country." It was at that point that this physician noted there were "very many scholarships" on "offer to African students. They send them to Eastern Europe and into the Soviet Union and even as far as China…"[77] Washington had to respond, lest an important advantage be lost to perceived opponents. With alacrity, quickly arranged was what one insider termed "the greatest number of African students ever to be brought to America at one time," involving "more than a half million dollars of scholarships…"[78] Springer-Kemp

revealed inferentially why this Communist initiative might light a fire under her own nation. She worried that "Red China" would "make important and serious inroads in Africa," as "hundreds of Africans from east and west Africa have been making quiet, unpublicized visits to Peking. Since 1958," she said in 1960, "I have been listening to some of those who have returned from these trips. They come away feeling welcomed and not treated as curios. They are never humiliated at hotels and other places of public accommodations, as they are in the [United States]…."[79] Washington had to respond accordingly by demonstrating to Africans their goodwill, which had not been very much on display.

Since Mboya, a consummate political animal and operator, was involved, clever calculations could not be far behind. The Kennedy in-law, Sargent Shriver, was told of the "complaint" that the "airlift was being used politically by Mr. Mboya."[80] It was felt he was collecting political chits by maintaining a stranglehold over who would—and would not—be selected for this game-changing opportunity to study abroad, quite a reward among desperately poor indigenes. Of the initial 81 students, the consul general in Nairobi opined that "some" were "selected more for political reasons—for example, the student's father might be politically important to Mboya—than because he or she was available."[81] It is possible that his fellow, Luo, Barack Obama, Sr., was selected for similar reasons which does not detract from—but in fact underscores further—the transformative impact of Mboya's initiative.

15

Colonialism Retreating?

Nairobi was tense.

That Kenya was in a fearsome neighborhood had long been recognized. The threat appeared to be coming from the west—the Congo. The uprisings that began to grip the erstwhile Belgian Congo in 1960 as it moved shakily toward independence suggested that the Communists could be moving toward nationalizing property as enraged Africans began to take bloody revenge for years of cruelty exacted against them.

Thus, at a time when Kenya should have been moving to reconcile itself toward African majority rule, it was seized with fear about events right next door. The visiting African American journalist, Louis Lomax noticed this in his visit to Nairobi, days before Congolese independence. "The whole place was about to snap," he thought, as "the local radio and the BBC filled the air with Congo horror stories." Then "Congo refugees," Europeans all, many of them without funds, all of them frightened and angry, began to flood into Nairobi as "white extremists demanded that a white volunteer army march into Congo." In search of the source of the story, the intrepid Lomax hurried over to the Belgian Consulate in Nairobi to obtain a visa for Congo and found an office jammed with refugees. "As I walked into the reception room," he recalled, "the women reacted with fright, the men turned a deep red. Three of them moved menacingly toward me," though, interestingly, "once they knew I was an American the tension subsided," as "the women turned warm and friendly. They asked me why the Congolese had turned against them." As was so often the case during his journey of discovery, his thoughts returned to his tumultuous upbringing in Jim Crow Georgia. "Here, in these Belgians," he declared, "was the same tragic incomprehension, total unperceptiveness and nonremembrance [*sic*] of history I had encountered time and time again among white people in the American Deep South…"[1]

These mostly Belgian refugees contributed mightily to the already high fright quotient in official Nairobi, already apprehensive of what fate awaited. Perhaps even more than the British, the Belgians may have been the most hysterical colonizers of them all. Like the British, the Belgians were intimidated at the possible arrival in their domain of African Americans, particularly with the advent of Marcus Garvey's movement, and had sought to bar them.[2]

Now with the United States seeking to deploy African Americans like Springer-Kemp, Randolph and McCray on the continent to protect Washington's interests, tiny Belgium had to adapt accordingly. But Brussels did so reluctantly for it was in the grip of a wild panic about what many saw as an inherent bestiality of those of African origin that only an iron hand could suppress. White supremacists in the United States publicized Belgian allegations about "the atrocities committed by the Congolese" against "the white people of the Congo," especially the rape of women. Stressed in this lurid account was an allegation bound to get the blood boiling from Nairobi to New Orleans—"of the 29 white women that have already been questioned by the [Belgian] Commission, 19, or two thirds of them, have admitted that they were raped…" In addition, "according to the testimony of every white woman, all of them were raped at least 20 times, in the presence of their children." Indicatively, when this report was translated by white supremacists in the United States, the malefactors were identified not as "African" or "Congolese" but as "Negro," the term traditionally reserved for African Americans, as if they were seeking to suggest that this latter group would do the same if enfranchised in the Deep South.[3] James Burnham, a more respectable right-winger in the United States, also emphasized that in Congo Africans were seeking to "rape Western women and eat Western men."[4]

Larry Devlin, the CIA chief in Congo, recalled bitterly events in newly independent Congo that he continued to find upsetting years later. "The soldiers would stop a white person and order him to get down on his knees and kiss a proffered foot. Once the man bent down, a boot would go into the back of his head, smashing his face into the pavement. If the victim didn't initially obey, he'd be clubbed over the head with a rifle butt or beaten in some other manner." These same soldiers had a distressing habit of "wandering the streets" or "drinking in bars" while "generally armed" with a "disconcerting habit of threatening or beating whites for no apparent reason…" Angrily, he charged that the Congolese leader, Patrice Lumumba, "turned a blind eye to these incidents." The prospect of Congo becoming a bastion for both Communist subversion and revenge seeking Africans may have contributed to Devlin's agency authorizing him to spend up to $100,000 on his "own authority on any operation that appeared feasible"—a sharp departure from past administrative practice signifying the gravity of the matter since "at that time, station chiefs were required to ask for authorization for any operational expenditure of more than fifty dollars."[5]

This apparent disdain for Europeans was not peculiar to Congo. Though at this point Ethiopia was absorbing up to 60% of U.S. military aid to Africa, the biggest recipient on the continent, yet when Washington's personnel went horseriding in the countryside they came to anticipate a stoning by village children.[6]

Philippa Schuyler—the daughter of the premier Negro conservative, George Schuyler—was a leading concert pianist and guest soloist at Congolese independence celebrations in 1960. The message she sent to a Euro-American audience nervous about the decline of colonialism was unnerving. She avidly supported the secession of Katanga from Congo, backed by the most retrograde of the settler population and spoke warmly of the "former high-ranking American army officer" she encountered there leading these forces. She reinforced the idea of

a Communist offensive in the region and thanked the African officer, Joseph Mobutu for his cooperation in her information gathering—he was subsequently to rule Congo for decades, becoming a living symbol of a regime based on thievery. She also reinforced the idea that the melanin deficient woman faced imminent molestation in Africa, describing in detail her desperate escape from this unwanted destiny, while noting, "in twenty four hours in Elizabethville, this reporter got one proposal of marriage and three declarations of love. By the time I left, it had risen to four proposals and sixty declarations!" Yet she could not avoid casting doubt on the innards of colonialism when she visited Leopoldville's "sumptuous Hotel Memling" where "not a colored face was visible, except among the servants"; Africans "did not, could not live in the white city. Even servants could not inhabit the dwellings of their white masters, but had to return to the native communities each night. No African were present" at her "recital" either, since "the blacks would not have been welcome and they knew it."[7]

Making sure that the calumny of Congo was spread far and wide was the BBC, which sought to project the idea that Africans were not ready for independence[8] and sought to recruit more French-speakers to insure this idea was spread more widely.[9]

What was happening in the Congo inevitably influenced attitudes in the United States toward Kenya—and African Americans as well—as a Belgian colony as large as the United States itself east of the Mississippi River but with few paved roads and a tiny number of college graduates lurched with difficulty toward independence. The problems of the Congo were manipulated to appear to be the problems of Kenya and Black America alike. Smith Hempstone, who had expressed reservations about Mboya, had been in and out of Katanga for years and through the pages of the Chicago press helped to conflate these radically different situations. He knew "[Moise] Tshombe personally," the symbol of secession who studied in schools sponsored by Methodist missionaries from the United States and, ergo, Hempstone urged on the flood of European and Euro-American mercenaries who arrived in Congo to bolster secession. Tellingly, he penned these words from the suburbs of Nairobi, as he indirectly linked the circumstances in different lands. Hempstone, a registered Republican who had fought in Korea, did not ignore the global aspects of this struggle, pointing out that in 1960 Congo's "Union Miniere exported—mainly to the [United States]—8,222 tons of cobalt, or more than 60 percent of the world's supply of this strategic metal."[10]

What seemed to be Kenya's irresistible, though bumpy, journey to independence hit a formidable roadblock after Congo endured turbulence. Even if a presumably non-Communist Mboya came to power in Nairobi, would he—or Kenyans—be able to resist the blandishments of the magnetically appealing Congolese leader, Patrice Lumumba, who was thought to be all too close to the radical left? And what kind of influence would this have on Black America, a number of whom had roots and ancestry in Congo?

Washington was worried. Convening shortly after Congolese independence, the National Security Council acknowledged freely that "it was still our objective to get the Belgians back into the Congo." Military intervention was inadvisable

since "the creation of a special force for Africa would raise the question of white vs. non-white troops which had already been raised by Lumumba…" Washington belatedly worried that years of malign attention to Africa were backfiring badly. Pentagon chief, Thomas Gates, whose background in investment banking provided him with an unparalleled knowledge of existing U.S. financial interests, expressed a real "sense of urgency about the problem of eventual Communist infiltration…" It was recognized that astoundingly desperate poverty in Congo—"income of many Congolese was less than one dollar per year"—was the root problem but it was the fear of what Moscow could do here (rather than the poor themselves) that hovered like a ghost over this febrile discussion.[11] "The Russians knew we Americans had several strikes against us because of the age-long white exploitation of the blacks,"[12] said Eleanor Lansing Dulles, sister of the secretary of state.

Nairobi was more nuanced in attributing blame. Washington was concerned when L.R. Briggs of the ultra-conservative United Party "joined the considerable number of critics who placed ultimate blame for the Congo mess on the United States," a view "widely shared" in "varying degrees by Europeans" and the press as a whole.[13] That the U.S. mass media, often blissfully unaware of complexity, was conflating Congo and Kenya to the detriment of the latter was suggested when the Nairobi legation reported in the Summer of 1960 there were "in a number of letters the Consulate General has received during the last two weeks from potential American travelers to Kenya asking our advice in view of somewhat alarmist reports in the American press…"[14]

Devlin agreed that his nation was slow to adapt to the changed circumstances of the continent. "It was not until 1957," lamented Devlin, "that a separate Bureau of African Affairs was established. In the CIA, our Africa Division was created in mid-1959, just a year before the [Congo] became independent."[15] Congo, it was thought, would hand Moscow a victory that could then be converted into gains in Kenya, Black America, and elsewhere.

This inattention and the casual conflation that equated Kenya and Congo harmed the former. Popular movies such as *The African Queen*, which engaged the latter, did not necessarily help things.[16]

The disturbances in the Congo helped to convince the wavering in the United States that neither Kenya nor Black America were ready for freedom. Edwin S. Munger of the American Universities field staff in New York City, no enemy of Africa, spoke passionately about how he was a "fascinated witness to the debacle in the Congo," as he wanly defended this beleaguered nation.[17]

But his was not an opinion shared universally. Max Yergan, now light years away from his past association with Robeson and Du Bois, became Chairman of the American Committee for Aid to Katanga Freedom Fighters, a leading opponent of African independence, whose sponsors included the influential conservative senators, Barry Goldwater of Arizona and James Eastland of Mississippi, and whose leaders included the prolific intellectual, William F. Buckley, Jr.,[18] and George Schuyler.[19]

Further afield, the signs emitted in Africa for the twinned futures of Kenya and Black America were similarly worrying to Washington. Robert Ruark, the chief

U.S. interpreter of African realities, told his many fans that on one day in Angola in 1961 "the rapes and tortures and robberies and obscenities and arsons" perpetrated by indigenes were "worse than the combined atrocities of the Portuguese in 500 years of colonization—worse than the Germans in Tanganyika, worse than the Belgians in the central Congo…" Africans ran amok and "hungered for rape and thirsted for blood…" This was particularly unwarranted, he thought, since the "lowliest bush native" there was a "prince compared to a typical example of Harlem's ghettos…"[20] Thus, if Angolans went berserk what would African Americans and Kenyans do if the bonds of repression were loosened?

In Cairo signals were similarly upsetting to Washington. On his way to Nairobi and Congo, Louis Lomax stopped in this Egyptian metropolis and was fascinated with what he witnessed. "They whisked me through customs (not one of my bags was touched), while the other sweating passengers were still waiting in the relentless heat," which he attributed to his being a Negro—a shock for one more accustomed to being pilloried for this status. He was moved by the "Egyptianization and Africanization" of the nation, as the "English language street signs have all come down" and "in my hotel, in the gift shop, the post office, the open markets, civil servants drew me aside to talk about our common enemy, the white man: What are you going to do about Little Rock? Mississippi. [When] are you American black men," he was asked querulously, "going to come and help us run the white man out of Africa?" The Egyptians, he said, "had heard nothing good about America" and "knew everything about Little Rock," as they "recounted these events with great detail, with fervor, as if they had been there." Lomax was told that "if the word gets out that you in any way apologize for, or seek to explain, what is happening in your country, every door will be closed to you. You will find it impossible to get interviews. Nobody will come near you," since the United States was portrayed as "anti-black…"[21]

Like a cold front and a warm front colliding in the Great Plains of Nebraska and fomenting a tornado, Washington was facing a similar dilemma in Africa as it sought to maintain positive relations with North Atlantic allies necessary to confront Moscow in Europe, while seeking to take advantage of these same allies being whipsawed by anticolonialism: enormous wind gusts of change were the inevitable result of this process. At home the United States was seeking to reconcile unreconstructed Jim Crow advocates and African Americans bent on freedom. Yet there was worry that if African ambitions were realized, Moscow would be the chief beneficiary and lust for European blood (excepting Russian, strangely enough) might galvanize indigenes. The United States may not have been sowing a tornado but it did face a hurricane of difficulties.

That was the impression left by the leading anticommunist journalist, Victor Riesel, as he made his way to Nairobi as Congo was wracked with pain. His anxiety was exposed when he zeroed in on the suspicious fact that "curiously the Swahili word for tea"—"Chai"—"sounds the same as the Russian" version: could this be coincidence or might there be some primordial connection between the region and Moscow stretching back to Pushkin? His presence in Nairobi was emblematic of a growing concern—if not hysteria—about events in Africa. Risesel mentioned this "great interest of America in Africa, the extraordinary number

of TV programs about it… [celebrity journalist] Chet Huntley and an NBC crew were due to arrive in East Africa soon…" Riesel was not assuaged when a settler told him that the "tragedy" of "Mau Mau" was "that most of the Europeans who were murdered were the very people who were most friendly to the Africans and who did the most for them"—was this a signal to liberals back home?

Yet, like those before him going back to Theodore Roosevelt, what seemed to occupy his attention was the lavish lifestyle one could enjoy in Kenya, where labor was ridiculously cheap and the climate was absorbingly pleasant. He visited Lake Magadi and found that "European executives have a beautiful club, replete with bar, piped-in music and a big swimming pool." Nairobi, he exclaimed, was the "Paris of the Sub-Sahara" and, as a result, "they don't hesitate to charge you high American rates for room and food." At a play, men were "dinner-jacketed and the women" were stunningly "low-bosomed—as metropolitan an audience as you can find in London," he said beamingly. The folks back home could rest secure in the notion that Nairobi was like Paris, London, New York—did that mean this was a nation worth saving from rampaging Africans or could indigenes be "trusted" to rule? As in Congo, he found angst among settlers, embodied by "latches on each of the two doors that lead into the bedrooms of the New Stanley Hotel" and "people do not walk after dark." It was then that Riesel, who specialized in labor matters, turned to the man who might be the answer or, perhaps, had the answer.

He found Mboya "handsome and boyishly energetic," with a "relaxed Harry Belafonte air" whose "small" office in the Kenya Federation of Labour had a "grime and congestion reminiscent of the union offices in Manhattan lofts during the 1920s and 1930s. Mboya's secretary, a very attractive girl—one of the few African girls we saw wearing lipstick—sat in a small office behind a typewriter that carried a plaque indicating it had been presented to the KFL by the Amalgamated Meatcutters of America…" In Mboya's bookcase he noticed a biography of U.S. labor leader, Sidney Hillman, and a short history of Springer-Kemp's union, the International Ladies' Garment Workers Union—probably gifts from her.

This all seemed rather calming to those who were anxious about events in the Congo but then Riesel went to have a talk with Eric Griffith-Jones, chief secretary of the colony, a post akin to being prime minister, and his words were hair-raising. For it was he who warned of a general strike by the Africans, a plan to "simply refuse to go out into the coffee fields, and let the beans rot, stay home and let the garbage of European civilization stifle the whites of the city. He talked of a secret civilian group who have unofficially worked out a program for keeping essential services running in that event—the railroads, hospitals, mail, food and water supply, communications…"[22]

Minds in Washington endured a kind of head-snapping vertigo for they acquiesced to—if not encouraged—the smashing of "Mau Mau" and the rise of Kenyan labor through Mboya but now, it seemed, a graver danger had arisen which if not Communist inspired was perceived as Communist in effect.

For with the end of the State of Emergency the raison d'etre for Kenyatta's jailing no longer held, so he had to be freed. The bearded African sent words of encouragement to "my dear brother," Du Bois. "I very often think of you," he

said, "with brotherly love."[23] Du Bois told the jailed Kikuyu leader, "I have been following your career since our meeting in 1945" in Manchester during the historic Pan-African gathering,[24] while noting, "I am glad hereby to greet you again and to wish for your early freedom…"[25]

Du Bois proved to be an oracle for Kenya was ultimately freed, yet Washington had not been freed of the accompanying notion that Kenyatta was a dangerous radical, probably a Communist, who represented the flip-side of the tormenting events in Congo: a challenge not only to life but to property as well. For those who had viewed the jailing of Kenyatta and the rise of Mboya as a seesaw of opportunity, the freeing of the roly-poly leader seemed to suggest that the danger of Communist inspired "Mau Mau," akin to what was perceived as occurring in Congo, was now firmly on the agenda.

It was in October 1961 that a "confidential" U.S. intelligence report concluded that Kenyatta was "alleged, probably correctly, to have joined the Communist Party in 1930."[26] Kenyatta was demonized repeatedly by U.S. authorities, who worried that an independent Kenya under his rule, might turn into an East Coast version of Nkrumah's Ghana, a headquarters for radical African American exiles such as Hunton and Du Bois. "While his eyes are bulging and commanding," said one U.S. diplomat, "they did not, at least for me, have the mesmerizing effect about which all of us had heard so much," though "he may have veiled them on this occasion." This birddog was not fooled when Kenyatta changed the subject and "spoke admiringly of Ralph Bunche with whom he had gone to the London School of Economics…"[27] When a journalist from the publishing empire of Henry Luce interviewed the bearded, still corpulent Kenyan, he remarked that the "whole performance reminded him of Paul Robeson acting as Jomo Kenyatta."[28]

Robert Ruark found it "curious" that Mboya shot to prominence in the United States "at almost the same time that the bearded old spellbinder," Kenyatta "was set loose from jail…" He wondered why Nairobi did not "parcel him off to Moscow where he learned most of the preachments which made Moscow synonymous with Mau Mau" or, he added sardonically "they could send him back to England and hope for a reconciliation with the white wife and child he deserted…" Ruark, a reliable barometer of conservative sentiment in both Washington and Nairobi, declared that "if Mau Mau is underground anywhere it can be found in Mboya's Kenya Federation of Labor…" He failed to understand how "the American people can lionize the likes of Mboya…"[29] George Houser of the ACOA termed this "irresponsible journalism," though events in Africa were giving some in Washington second thoughts.[30] The same held true in London for when Kenyatta appeared on a television broadcast, much adverse comment erupted.[31]

As so often happened in Africa, there seemed to be a spreading contagion, with signs of radicalism of various sorts not simply localized in the figures of Lumumba, Nkrumah, and Kenyatta but spreading like an oil-spot across the continent. "Communist influence in labor circles while not of dangerous proportions," cautioned the consul general in Nairobi, "appeared greatest in Gabon, Togo, Dahomey and Cameroon." This conclusion was based on a conversation with G.K. Nyawade, general secretary of Kenya's Local Government Workers Union, after an ICFTU tour. This was suggestive of how Mboya's federation

had become a tool of Washington since the mission also visited Leopoldville and huddled in a "secret meeting" with leaders that pointedly did not include Lumumba.[32]

The British TUC was licking its wounds as all this was occurring. It had been out-maneuvered by the AFL-CIO in Nairobi and Brussels (ICFTU headquarters) and was seemingly paralyzed as Africa marched toward freedom. Yet during the height of these difficulties it tried to regain its footing. Subjected to withering criticism by British labor were the ICFTU and "the Americans" alike who "in their constant reiteration of the terms 'anti-imperialism' " and "anti-colonialism" supposedly were misleading and, wrongly, tended to "build up African racial confidence" and "prestige" Like a voice crying in the wilderness, the TUC wailed, "in theory, practice, and experience we know more about the sound development of African trade unions than either the ICFTU or the Americans" but, alas, "the rebellion in Algeria and the racialist factors in Pan-African propaganda of Ghana all contribute to a turning away from the white man which makes the task of development in British territory still more difficult…" First "Mau Mau," then Congo seemed to spell a doom more forbidding than simple anticolonialism.[33]

As the clock wound down on British colonialism, the TUC worried not only about the supposed threat presented by the Communists that Kenyatta was thought to represent but what they perceived as the "racialist influences" symbolized by "Mau Mau" (also ironically symbolized by the double threat that was Kenyatta) and events in Congo, which had become "much more powerful." For this they blamed the "incursion into African affairs of the American government and of the American trade unions." For "by using their Negro trade union leaders, they build up a racial approach at the same time."[34]

The *Daily Telegraph* in London, echoed the TUC, and warned of the "possible disintegration" of the ICFTU because of overbearing and brash AFL-CIO tactics. Because of the U.S. unions, it was reported, the ICFTU had lost both "effectiveness" and "coherence." While the U.S. unions "view the problem in terms of the world political struggle against Communism," the TUC, "along with other European trade union leaders, takes the empirical approach of seeking to adapt unionism to local conditions and building up from the bottom."[35] Consequently, the TUC threatened to quit the ICFTU because "domination by [the] [United States]" was claimed.[36]

The TUC, despite their teeth-gnashing and partisanship had put their finger on problems perceived by the White House—the rising tide of Pan-Africanism (or what they termed "racialism") though Washington obviously would not agree with the idea that the United States and its labor unions were also a problem and probably would not concur with the idea that "racialism" presented a larger danger than Communists (instead they would have conflated the two). Yet the TUC's self-interest should not obscure the point that the United States had served to build up Mboya, had lavished funds upon him, had out-maneuvered London in the process and this did place a weighty thumb on the scales of history.

Still, London could have blocked the AFL-CIO if it had been less wedded to colonialism and more nimble in maintaining influence in a rapidly changing environment.[37] For example, the Kenyan students who were able to gain

higher education in the United States would not have objected to matriculating in Britain. Instead, the Colonial Office worried incessantly about the impact of anticolonial attitudes in the United States upon these students.[38]

Virtually catatonic in its response to the bracing winds of anticolonialism, London proved to be remarkably ham-handed in handling the complexities of a new situation. For by funding Mboya's university initiative, Washington managed to educate the emerging leaders of Kenya and forge bonds in a manner that was seemingly beyond London's ken. Mboya's "airlift," meant 200 Kenyans studying for degrees by 1959 and many hundreds more after that: there were only fifty Kenyan students studying in the United States by 1957. The nation's first Ph.D., Julius Kiano, attended the University of California–Berkeley and came home with an African American wife—one of many bonds of singular intimacy that were to cement ties between the United States and Kenya.[39] Thus, Kariuki K. Njiri—member of a prominent African family—wed an African American, Ruth Stutts, who happened to be secretary of Reverend James Robinson, an influential figure in U.S.-Africa relations in his own right.[40] Njiri, who received a degree from Lincoln University in Pennsylvania—Nkrumah's alma mater—also matriculated at the New School in New York.[41] Kenya's Nobel Laureate, Wangari Maathi, who studied in Kansas, returned home to find her best friend, Vertistine Mbaya, an African American who had married a Kenyan and came to live in Nairobi in the early 1960s.[42]

Surely it was no simple matter for these Kenyans to pull up roots and travel to North America—though that is no excuse for London not providing more opportunities and breaking with the ancient policy of maintaining ignorance among Africans. By the time London could have turned away from this policy, the events in the Congo had ignited a new wave of hysteria that had deepened the paralysis of colonialism. Sir Michael Blundell, no friend of African independence, still acknowledges that "a considerable contribution was made to the future of the country by the crash programmes for overseas higher education created largely through the efforts of Tom Mboya." Even Sir Michael, who rightfully could have seen in this initiative the epitaph for the system he defended, was moved by the scene at Nairobi's airport as young Kenyans departed.[43]

Tear-inducing scenes aside, London had hard-boiled reasons that explain why it did not bother to educate Africans. Consider Julius K. Gikonyo wa Kiano, for example. London kept an eye on him while he was studying in California and was not pleased. He was spouting "nonsense," it was reported, as he "broadcast in this area on the Mau Mau problem in Kenya"; with disgust it was observed that he "appears to devote his entire time to speaking against Britain rather than to his studies…"[44] When Dr. Kiano returned to Kenya, his degree provided him with cachet that he might have otherwise lacked. He had the authority to contest trivial regulations, for example, not being allowed to sing[45] or have only "one word of greeting" at rallies.[46] When Edwin S. Munger of the American Universities field staff in Manhattan termed him in 1960 as "probably the most important man in Kenya today,"[47] he was not necessarily exaggerating. Even before independence, Kiano was traveling back and forth to the United States, Japan[48]—and Israel.[49] Kiano maintained steadfastly his U.S. ties which served as a firewall against

attack when he was "overjoyed about [a] conference on Pan-Africanism" to be held at the University of Pennsylvania;[50] likewise, his degree and his ties to the ascending power helped to shield him from any brickbats that might be hurled when he appeared on platforms with Mboya and the rising radical: Oginga Odinga.[51]

Kiano, who sported dark spectacles and had a small compact build, left a deep impression on the visiting U.S. journalist, Victor Riesel. After noting he was "now married to an American Negro girl," he detailed his U.S. education as if to underscore his credentials: "Pioneers Business College in Philadelphia, Storrs College in Harpers Ferry…BA at Antioch…MA at Stanford and his Ph.d. [*sic*] at the University of California…" Try as he might, however, he could not get Dr. Kiano to condemn "Mau Mau" which the Kikuyu leader insisted on referring to as the "intimidation wing" of the movement. "Since the Mau Mau," he said, "things have changed because the Europeans gave up the idea of white supremacy."[52]

As Kiano's remarks suggested, those who studied in the United States were gaining a reputation for militancy, which was not being swallowed easily in light of the frenzy surrounding events in Congo. As London and the settlers saw it, it was pure madness to deposit indigenes in the boiling racial pot then extant in the United States where marches and boycotts by African Americans were becoming de rigeur and expect them to return home unaffected. Wangari Maathi argued in turn that the sapping educational experience Kenyans like herself endured at home helped to drive them across the Atlantic. She was shoeless on her first day of school, which was not uncommon, and punished for speaking her mother tongue—also typical. This was "undermining our self-confidence," no surprise there either. "This continues even today in Kenyan schools," demonstrating the difficulty in halting the vast momentum of colonialism, which "contributes to the trivialization of anything African and lays the foundation for a deeper sense of self-doubt and an inferiority complex."

Things began to change somewhat in 1959 with Mboya's U.S. journey, the stirrings in the Congo and the decolonization talks in London. It was at that time that she traveled to the United States and received the kind of education to which settlers took exception. Passing through New York City, she was "amazed" at the number of African Americans she saw, suggestive of how successful the curtain of ignorance had been drawn in Kenya. "I often wondered," she mused, "why I should come to America to see black people being treated as harshly as I had witnessed in Kenya as the British attempted to crush the Mau Mau movement." She confessed that "many of my fellow Kenyan students elsewhere" in the United States "experienced racism in finding jobs, places to stay and friends." After attending a meeting of the Nation of Islam—which had given rise to Malcolm X—she had an epiphany: "from that time on I started to think more critically about religion and developed an interest in other faiths…" She also deepened her understanding of the common destinies of Africans and African Americans, a form of Pan-Africanism that London dismissed as "racialism" and which Congo had brought forcefully to their urgent attention.[53]

London did not quite realize that the forced marginalizing of towering figures like Robeson and Du Bois, along with the simultaneous turn to the right of the

labor movement that had been in sync with both, had provided fertile ground for the rise of a kind of nationalism that then influenced visiting Kenyan students. But London was not alone. Thus it was that the stalwart YMCA [Young Men's Christian Association] expressed alarm at what these students were being exposed to; there were "probably 500 Kenya students in America at present," according to Tom Kay, a Y official in Kenya, who "found their way through the good offices of Tom Mboya…" Yet there were "certain dangers in the fact that this good work is associated with African nationalist politics into which is introduced the concept that such students are being assisted to obtain 'liberation' from the dread cancer of 'Colonialism'…"[54]

Although the YMCA was a U.S. group, Kay had seemingly been imbued with the colonial spirit while in Nairobi—or so thought one of his co-workers.[55] Yet, his pained remarks suggest that apprehension about exposing Africans to education in the age of Congo stretched far beyond the confines of London and Brussels.

In fact, this apprehension reached all the way to the United States itself. As the number of Kenyan students surged, the *Washington Post* reported that African students generally often challenged their African American peers to be more aggressive in seeking freedom.[56] Perhaps it was not coincidental that student activism among Negro students seemed to coincide with the arrival of Africans. Moreover, it did seem anomalous that schools which theretofore had hardly stirred in recruiting African American students were now waxing enthusiastic about the prospect of recruiting Africans. Thus, in 1960, at the Princeton Inn in Princeton, New Jersey—a stone's throw from a university that took pride in its identification with the elite sons of the former Slave South and barely had bestirred itself to admit Negro students—a high-level conference took place in early 1960 featuring the leading lights of philanthropy (Ford, Carnegie, and Rockefeller) along with the American Council on Education—and Julius Kiano. This was occurring as was noted properly "the number of East African students attending American universities and colleges has increased very rapidly…" During the 1958–1959 academic year—just before the airlift—there were 73 Kenyan students (including 67 young men), 453 from Egypt, 145 from Ethiopia and 150 from Ghana: 1,735 African students altogether.[57] Assessing this historic phenomenon and moving it forward was high on the conference agenda.

Again, this was not just altruism but a response to Cold War pressures and the fear that Moscow could capture fertile hearts and minds by dint of scholarships.[58] The "Africans' thirst for education," concluded a colonial report, "has become almost proverbial," which was a boon for Moscow.[59]

Yet this increase in ties between Africans and African Americans was not without cost to U.S. imperialism. Not only did Africans tend to influence U.S. Negroes toward militancy but the reverse might have been true as well—or so thought Bruce McKenzie, Nairobi's then Minister of Agriculture. He told a visiting U.S. delegation that Dr. Kiano's spouse, a Negro, "tended to be anti-British openly and in protracted private conversation became anti-American and anti-white in general."[60] African Americans, bludgeoned by slavery then Jim Crow, were often in no mood to sing the praises of the country that harbored them, nor

Euro-Americans in general. This too could complicate the execution of U.S. foreign policy and therefore demanded better treatment so as to assuage this potentially harmful bitterness.

How the United States managed to increase the number of African students is also illustrative of advantages Washington held over London[61] : the tradition of philanthropy in the former nation was more developed[62]—and simply more feasible[63]—than in the United Kingdom. Thus, the Ford Foundation became heavily involved in Kenyan education, though an official in the regional university center in Makerere complained of the "unhappy effect of foreign scholarships taking the cream of the crop of the students…"[64] The Royal College of Nairobi, as a result, asked for $135,000 from Ford, giving the United States a base there.[65] Yet the colonizer seemed to applaud as Washington steadily encroached on Kenyan turf. When Sultan Nanji was given a scholarship by the U.S. Department of Agriculture to study marketing in the United States, Britain, and Europe more broadly, this was hailed by one British official. Washington "was prepared," it was said, "to make available resources for the purpose of sending trainees to the United States, which would not cost us a penny"; moreover, "thanks" to the Voice of America, the BBC was "able…to conduct a limited survey" on "audience research" in Kenya. Once stalwart London had been reduced to nibbling on Washington's leavings.[66]

As the colony moved toward liberation, the influence of the United States grew accordingly. As with higher education, London was also losing the battle of the airwaves, another important front in the battle of ideas. "The battle for the defence of democracy is not won by weapons alone," instructed one solon in a British parliamentary debate on Kenya in 1959. This narrow stress on weapons was a "kind of Maginot Line," it was said in an acknowledgment that television "can have a 'unique influence' since it was 'impossible to flood Africa with television propaganda from afar and from an alien source because the thing [was] not just possible.'" Unlike radio, "a new television service in Kenya would have the stage to itself"[67]—or so it was thought.

With the State of Emergency, the colony provided communal radio sets in villages, plus there were others owned individually—which also meant indigenes could now listen to foreign broadcasts as well, including the dulcet tones of Bing Crosby, the famed U.S. actor, singer, and comedian.[68] By 1962 there were television broadcasts, with a substantial infusion of canned programs from Hollywood[69]—refuting the maunderings of overly optimistic British parliamentarians[70]—and those with television sets could be seduced by *Doctor Kildare, Bonanza,* and other symbols of the "American Way of Life,"[71] including *Huckleberry Hound*.[72]

Just as the TUC was nudged aside by the AFL-CIO in Kenya, a similar process occurred in the airwaves—with similar dynamics. For when George Middleton Cahan of the United States, who had organized three television stations in San Francisco, San Diego and Los Angeles, moved to Nairobi to do the same, Mboya was given credit.[73] When Kenya television tried to "get the right number of African faces on the screen at the right time," the "problem" was "money" and the answer sought rested with the Ford Foundation.[74]

This invasion of U.S. programs had been going on for years but as London got weaker, it increased. During World War II, the radio show by the former British national, the wiseacre comedian, Bob Hope, along with that of the cheapskate comedian, Jack Benny, were broadcast to U.S. servicemen in Britain and became wildly popular among the subjects of that nation.[75] The BBC seemed frozen when in the year of Suez, a U.S. network began "exploring the possibility of buying into television stations in Cuba, Jamaica, Spain and elsewhere…"[76]

Thus, as the Eisenhower regime was passing into history to be replaced by that of Mboya's new patron, John F. Kennedy, the former U.S. general made one last fateful decision. Uncle Sam was flexing his impressive biceps, a clear sign to the colonizer's now flaccid elite, be it in Whitehall, universities, the TUC or the BBC. For reportedly, in one of his last days at the White House, the man known fondly as "Ike," the kindly national uncle, turned to his Secretary of State and said flatly that Patrice Lumumba—the Congolese symbol of apparent European (excluding Russian) decline—should be eliminated, which promptly occurred.[77] "We agreed that Lumumba could be shot at long range with the proper equipment," said the U.S. agent, David Doyle, but as it turned out less delicate tactics were used to eliminate him.[78] Lumumba had sought to build bridges to his adversaries, offering concessions and visiting ICFTU offices twice in a week in the period leading to this murder.[79] Keen analysts may have seen this as a signal to Kenyatta but it also held meaning for Mboya, alerting him to the boundaries of his own reach. More than this, it signaled that the rising superpower was pushing aside declining European colonizers and asserting its dominance in their erstwhile colonies.

16

Liberation Looms

"The recent quarrel between Nixon and Kennedy as to who should help Mboya was a pretty sordid incident in the presidential campaign."[1]

So suggested a high-level colonial official in Nairobi as the campaign to elect a new U.S. president gathered steam. Tom Mboya, who had wowed the nation during his triumphal tour in 1959 seemed to have become a kingmaker. "The outcome of the forthcoming presidential elections are of particular interest to Mboya," the Nairobi Consulate reported. "He has talked with all the presidential candidates at one time or another" and "favors Senator Kennedy but believes that Vice President Nixon will win"—not uncommon wisdom in the Spring of 1960. "Senator [Hubert] Humphrey, in his opinion, tends to give answers without completely knowing the situation…" Particularly because of his ample donations to the airlift, Kennedy had won the all-important Mboya primary.[2]

Mboya's chief competitor as interpreter of Kenya to the United States—Robert Ruark—took an opposite tack. "I am beginning to chew at him a little bit," he told Nixon in speaking of his opponent; the ski-nosed presidential hopeful was told, "at least one articulate columnist is in your corner…"[3] Nixon was effusively grateful.[4]

Yet, unlike Ruark, by becoming so close to leading U.S. figures, Mboya was exposed dangerously, not only among indigenes who had good reason to be suspicious of a nation that had been identified so closely with the colonizer and, ironically, the settlers too were not exactly enthralled him with either. As Mboya was conducting his own presidential primary, his Kenya Federation of Labor was being accused of pursuing a "Mau Mau strike pattern" on "coffee and sisal estates," which was not good news for the planter class.[5] The planters also were complaining about what a U.S. emissary termed the "allegedly baleful influence of the AFL-CIO upon the Kenya labor movement"; the Kenya Federation of Employers had given him an earful when he traveled to Mombasa.[6] This emissary, Charles Withers, observed candidly that "the port employers" tended to "believe that African labor leaders receive, or at any rate retain only bad influences from the United States"; they "state categorically that most of the Mombasa labor troubles stem from visits to the United States," which left the bosses "deeply hurt."[7]

Washington had latched on to Mboya as a way out of a crisis spawned by "Mau Mau," but as a labor leader he was naturally interested in garnering higher

wages for his members and organizing more workers to become members; yet this was not necessarily in the interests of the settlers as a whole, particularly those among them who were employers. This meant that he was despised by the employer class, which in turn resented Washington. But Washington itself, just as it was climbing over a prostrate Empire, had to worry about those seeking to seize its cherished perch.

London did not particularly like the idea that Washington had moved into what had been—and still was—their territory: by this juncture there were five major U.S. foundations in Kenya, 500 missionaries—and the large footprint left by the AFL-CIO. As Washington saw it, "under covert instruction from New Delhi the Indians have been and are working in conflict with British and, for that matter, U.S. interests in Kenya"—though the latter's "agricultural production is largely complementary to that of the [United States]," as this nation was "Kenya's third best customer. Of countries exporting to Kenya, the U.S. ranks seventh" with tobacco being "the only U.S. agricultural commodity being imported in substantial qualities."[8]

Yet New Delhi had the advantage of having a substantial Indian population in Kenya, who were more compatible with their homeland than African Americans. New Delhi was also close to Moscow, which gave its interests in Kenya a sinister hue to some. As if that were not sufficient competition, the U.S. representative in Bonn reminded that "the German unions [are] extremely interested in Mboya" and they "[have] more money than any other Western trade union organization except the AFL-CIO…"[9] With the loss of Suez, Kenya had become even more critical to London.[10] Yet would this remain true if a sovereign Kenya could make its own choices?[11]

Looming above all—as reflected in the concern about India—was the Cold War. When Dr. Mungai Njoroge, who had been educated in the U.S, returned to Kenya, he expressed "fears" about "increasing Communist influences" there. In response he was busily "trying to 're-Africanize' himself," though he did not make explicit what this entailed and also "admitted" that his "long stay in the [U.S] might have made him supersensitive to Communism," which was probably true.[12]

These Cold War tensions complicated Mboya's ability on the continent to portray himself as a leader, since U.S. foreign policy and the United States itself were not particularly admired principally because of Jim Crow and suspicions about involvement in Lumumba's murder. His proximity to Irving Brown, thought to be close to the CIA, did not help things, particularly since this U.S. operative actually drafted speeches and resolutions for Mboya's federation when they participated in Pan-African trade union meetings.[13] As Richard Freund of the U.S. legation saw it, Brown had "accepted a new responsibility for himself as mastermind, spark-plug and overseer" for the Kenya Federation of Labor. The AFL-CIO was the paymaster, or so thought Freund. This was part of an attempt to waylay Nkrumah's Ghana who had sought to crush the KFL initiative. "Apparently having recognized the enormity of the challenge which he faces, Mboya turned to Brown" with all seeking to keep "the entire transaction … secret." George McCray, the Negro trade union leader, was also implicated.[14] Secretary of State Dean Rusk recognized that the "best approach" to Mboya was via "Irving Brown…"[15]

Just after Rusk's appointment, Mboya had chosen to "closet himself in conversation with Congressman [Charles] Diggs," also a leading member of the Democratic Party who was then visiting Nairobi. Mboya "may have made an explicit [bid] for financial aid. He had told [a U.S. emissary] that the KFL badly needs money" and "in this same conversation Mboya divulged that he had cabled Irving Brown" in this regard urging "him to visit Nairobi as soon as possible for urgent discussions…"[16]

Naturally, there were complications within the ranks of the AFL-CIO itself as Walter Reuther of the UAW was jousting with more conservative elements. Mboya did not help matters when he miffed George Meany when he sent an invitation personally to Reuther to come to Nairobi. "There is still considerable jealousy between the AFL and CIO wings of the 'united' organization," said a U.S. representative[17]—that Mboya was a prize for both increased his influence on both.

Either out of sincerity or in an attempt to distinguish himself from his right-wing competition, Reuther felt compelled to denounce the settler regime in increasingly hostile terms. He had been expected to arrive in Nairobi to dedicate the KFL building he had helped to fund, then cancelled his journey, and forwarded a blistering message castigating the "'historic evil of colonial exploitation,'" which touched to the raw the easily bruised sentiments of the settlers.[18] This had sparked snide comments about alleged racist UAW policies in the former Slave South by his union.[19]

Of course, the TUC and some in the ICFTU continued to harbor intense dislike over AFL-CIO activities; a visiting U.S. diplomat in London and Brussels found not only "intrigue" as a result but also that "displeasure with the AFL-CIO permeated every conversation."[20]

These increasingly sharp conflicts involving Kenya—Washington vs. London, Moscow, Bonn, New Delhi and others; AFL vs. CIO; Reuther vs. Meany; AFL vs. ICFTU—helped to corrupt the emerging nation's politics, as these powerful patrons backed (or sabotaged) allies (or antagonists). It also contributed to tensions: that Mboya was Luo and backed by the United States and Kenyatta was Kikuyu and was not so aided, was not accidental, and helped to fuel ethnic conflict, particularly since the Kenya Federation of Labor—a class based organization designed to unite across ethnic lines—was not as strong as it could be. Kenya was a "'fortress colony'" according to U.S. intelligence with "exacerbating tension between black and white"—and he could have added others too.[21]

Kenya was hobbling toward independence on feet that were tightly bound. Belatedly after JFK assumed office, the Nairobi mission of the United States urged caution, averring that "we should for present at least not become involved" in an increasingly "complex situation" in Kenya. "We lack sufficient understanding [of] violent personal feelings and relationships involved and intervention, however adroit, would in our experience quickly become widely known…"[22]

Leading the charge from the left against this interference was Oginga Odinga, a leader of the leading anti-colonial force—the organization that came to be known as KANU—and a man unafraid to visit Moscow and Peking. "'We have NATO bases in our country supported by the USA,'" were the words he reportedly

uttered in China. "'We have U.S. infiltration in our trade union movements and we have their intelligence service all over Kenya. Indeed,'" he charged, "'the threat of U.S. imperialism is greater than that of Britain herself…'" Mboya was "worried," asserted the U.S. consul general, "because he fears Odinga's rantings will prejudice American support for his student airlift," a considerable source of patronage for him.[23]

Odinga was not the only person scorning Mboya. According to the United States, a "faction" of the youth wing of the dominant party among indigenes, KANU, led by a figure identified as "[Munyua] Waiyaki" was trying to "implicate Mboya with the United States in a sinister fashion" by "promising to release a bombshell document linking Mboya in a secret pact with the State Department and U.S. Labor. Opinion was divided," it was said in early 1961, "whether or not Mboya would survive this latest attempt on his political life." The perpetrator of this plot declared "'it is known now that the British government favor Mr. Mboya" instead of "Kenyatta." Odinga was said to be behind it all "accusing Mboya of seeking to substitute American economic domination and control for British colonialism." Thus, Richard Freund sighed with resignation, "Mboya's enemies will continue to play dirty pool."[24]

Walter H. Ottenyo, Secretary General of the important Kenya Petroleum and Oil Workers Union, was deemed by Washington to be among the enemies of the favored Mboya. Barely 30 years old in 1960, this Luo was of average height and sturdy build and sported steel-rimmed eye glasses that were old-fashioned even then. He had been employed as a clerk at Shell Oil and was "considered an overly aggressive negotiator by the oil companies…" The Consulate was aghast when he was invited to the United States for a seducing three month "study tour" given his "persistent and sharp sniping" at the United States. This emissary had "never heard an African express such definite anti-American feelings while at the same time being seemingly unconditioned by Communist thinking…" His "belligerence" included the still profoundly relevant claim that the United States itself was "built by slave labor and consequently American assistance should not be considered as kindness but repayment of a debt…" Washington was "sullied," he thought, by "its treatment of the Negro" and he went as far as saying, "'I won't feel much sympathy for America so long as discrimination against Negroes continues…'" Ottenyo strongly defended Nkrumah. Rationalizing the proposed junket, it was felt that "a happy experience in the United States could alter his outlook considerably." But this was playing with a live hand grenade since "personal involvement in a 'Jim Crow' incident, given his prickly nature and racial sensitivities will blot out whatever positive impressions he may receive."[25]

This skepticism of Washington seemed to be catching fire. Ronald Ngala of the Kenya African Democratic Union denounced a "new form of colonialism by other white imperialists other than the British" that was "coming to Kenya." Washington was seeking to "sabotage" Kenya's liberation, he said: "the USA seems to believe that if the British, the French and Belgians leave any African country it must be replaced by another white power…"[26]

Both Mboya and Washington may have been too clever by half in forging their mutually satisfactory relationship for it was convincing many indigenes that

"independence" would mean only a new kind of colonialism—or "neo-colonialism." When Freund met with Kenyatta, the wizened leader raised quickly the "allegations" of Mboya "receiving American money and said how dangerous that would be [for] future U.S.-Kenya relations." A dismayed Freund remarked, "I may have reassured him somewhat but have no doubt some suspicions remain."[27]

These were the kind of allegations which—even if not true—helped to shape perceptions damagingly. In any case, the settler regime seemed to be salivating at the prospect of a Mboya-Kenyatta spat, as one "secret" report ascertained that Kenyatta found Mboya "brash and unsympathetic," while the Luo leader thought that the paramount leader "despite his praise, both dislikes him and is very jealous…"[28] The regime also believed that Odinga "has always been envious of the recognition accorded to Mboya in international circles," and the latter's tie to Washington "led Odinga to seek a similar sponsorship from the Communist bloc…" Mboya's ties to the United States had hurt him in KANU, it was said of this man who had "an energy quite uncharacteristic of his race…"[29] Mboya's ties to the United States were also having negative impact in the United States itself: George Houser of ACOA told Mboya that some of his Kenyan friends were shunning him "because they feel that my primary relationship is with you and therefore they don't quite trust me."[30]

Mboya continued to identify the settlers with Jim Crow advocates which angered and united both against him. He also railed against "hypocritical" U.S. policy that embraced colonizers while seeking to "stand for things" that were "noble." He knew Africans who had experienced Jim Crow, so it was a "question of America putting her own house in order" and "the Negro problem, this segregation problem in the United States, is a constant point of weakness…"[31]

These admirable sentiments did not halt the varied attempts to depose Mboya. In early 1961 he complained to George Meany asserting that "attempts are being made from practically every quarter to oust me both from politics and from the Trade Union Movement"; it was "very obvious now that Eastern countries are sharing a greater interest and are resolved at least to encourage a head on collision between the African leaders in Kenya," a veiled reference to Odinga. "I have been accused variously of being an American stooge and selling Kenya to America and so on," while Mboya contended instead, "I have very frankly stated my position which is neither anti-American nor anti-Russian…"[32]

Perhaps. What was uncontested was that Mboya's connections to the U.S. elite remained strong. When Kennedy's good friend, Chester Bowles, heard that "John Spencer and his wife" were coming to Nairobi for a "two year assignment," he asked Mboya to assist them, particularly "Mrs. Spencer, who was Hope Rockefeller," the "daughter of John Rockefeller" and a "classmate of my daughter Sally at Smith…"[33] Similarly, he remained close to the powerful Reuther brothers and managed to recruit a high court judge, the mercurial William O. Douglas, to his camp.[34]

As the winds from the left generated by Odigna picked up speed, Mboya responded by seemingly turning to the left. After Lumumba's murder, demonstrations erupted in Nairobi with placards featuring slogans hostile to both Washington and Mboya.[35] In what seemed to be a response Mboya allegedly

raised searching questions about the untimely plane crash that led to the death of the U.N. Secretary General, Dag Hammarskjold, including the "charge that [Washington] with other Western nations conspired [to] wreck Congo and shore up Tshombe government and are all implicated in murder…"[36] Mboya reputedly believed that the death of the U.N. leader "was not an accident but that 'he had been murdered.'"[37] Then Mboya stunned Washington by "planning" a tour of "unspecified Communist countries," though he sought to "'assure'" his trans-Atlantic friends "'beforehand that we need not worry.'"[38]

But these friends were likely not assured when during his nationally televised interview in the United States, Mboya proclaimed, "if anyone has ever regarded me as pro-West, perhaps they have never listened to my speeches properly…" He took strong exception to the fact that the "Ghana Minister of Finance" had been "refused service at American restaurants…"[39]

Behind his back, Mboya's erstwhile friends in the United States were beginning to have second thoughts about him. Reporting on an important Pan-African trade union summit in May 1961, Irving Brown identified three blocs—"Guinea-Ghana" on the left; "North African trade unions" and the "unions grouped primarily around Tom Mboya… [who] spoke well at the Conference and was quite firm in the beginning" but tellingly "weakened towards the end. He could not seem to be able to ignore the atmosphere" generated by the "Guinea-Ghana boys" [*sic*]. Seemingly shaken, Brown asserted, "for the first time, our friends—even Tom Mboya—experienced directly what an organized, pro-Eastern offensive can mean under the guise of Pan-Africanism and Positive Neutrality…"[40]

Mboya also seemed to have lost his almost preternatural equanimity, stressing, "I am an African nationalist who supports Pan-Africanism"[41]—who just happened to be Washington's favorite African. Yet such brave words could not hide the fact that his opponents were on the offensive. The leader of Kenyan oil workers, Walter Ottenyo, had returned from a morale-boosting trip to Conakry, Guinea breathing fire—"the usual slogans and shouting," claimed Mboya, along with a "lot of stupid talk."[42]

Whether or not Ottenyo was doing as claimed, it was apparent that the Kenyan trade union movement—which had been boosted in the vacuum left by the crushing of the heavily Kikuyu resistance—was in a malaise. How could it not be? For if it were to seek aggressively to raise the miserably low wages and horrid working conditions of its members, charges of "Communist" surely would have followed, that its patron in Washington would have had difficulty in failing to parrot. Washington seemed most interested in having Kenyan unions serve as a stumbling block to Ghana-Guinea attempts—backed by Moscow—to strengthen African trade unions.[43]

Yet this remedy was not alleviating the original malady. The largesse from the United States was not helping to convert workers into trade union militants willing to confront management, though it did manage to convert some to champagne lifestyles.[44] Then the AFL-CIO decided to provide 287 single family housing units in Nairobi, financed by loans from U.S. and West German unions. The $896,000 project involved a substantial $375,000 loan from the AFL-CIO itself, at an interest rate of 4% payable in 15 years: whatever else could be said,

this would certainly give U.S. unions leverage in Kenya for years to come.[45] Yet Springer-Kemp's own union in the United States was then being investigated because of "alleged…discrimination against Negroes and Puerto Ricans" and by her own admission, "two of my best friends, Mr. Herbert Hill of the NAACP and Mr. Odell Clarke and some others were looking for my scalp since I was to testify" for her union.[46] This was the kind of incident that infuriated the settler regime who would inquire pointedly why she didn't spend more time fighting bias in Manhattan before taking her act to Nairobi?

When it seemed that his fellow Kenyans were not buying Mboya's attempt to refashion himself as a man of both East and West, he turned decisively to the latter, condemning the "Eastern countries" who seemed to desire a "head on collision between the African leaders in Kenya…" Mboya styled himself then as "dangerous to the plans and programmes of the Communists and their agents" and denied that he was an "American stooge:" "various negative forces would try to hoodwink our people into believing that everything from the East is pure white and everything from the West is stinking…"[47] But Mboya may have overplayed his hand with his brief feint to the left in the wake of the tragic events in Congo for—contrary to his earlier visit—when he arrived in Washington in the late spring of 1961, his arrival "created no great stir," according to a British diplomat. There was "evidence," he said, "that the State Department were embarrassed by Mboya's request to see the President," his old friend, Kennedy—yet simultaneously he was being "accused by his political rivals in Kenya, in particular, Negala [*sic*], of being too pro-American…"[48]

Confirming evidence substantiating the latter point arrived when James Gichuru, a Kikuyu teacher educated in the United States was named Chairman of the Kenya African National Union and a nine member committee was appointed to draw up a new constitution, that included Mboya. He was greeted rudely and with hostility when he arrived for a KANU meeting, as the crowd chanted, "'you have sold us,'" and "'we don't want your American money.'"[49] Mboya thumbed his nose at such slogans by adopting an airplane as his symbol, reminding Kenyans of his role in the student airlift.[50] The left was not placated. Odinga contended that London and Washington were "grooming" Mboya "for leadership in the place of Kenyatta and with the help of Gichuru, Mboya hoped to rally Kikuyu support." As Odinga saw it, Mboya's alleged base among unions was akin to a house without an adequate foundation since it was too dependent on Yankee patronage and "was never a rank and file movement supported from below."[51]

Odinga may have underestimated Mboya, however, for sensing to cover all bases, he began taking lessons in French, which convinced one U.S. agent of the "unbelievable energy and intelligence of the man." This, he thought, would aid in "cementing relations with the French-speaking states in Africa," and his becoming an "active Catholic" would not hurt either in that regard as an outgrowth of his recent marriage to a Catholic woman.[52]

For despite the secret razzing of British diplomats, Mboya retained his star power in the United States and this was a commodity too valuable to discard, even if it dragged him into a Cold War battle that he had not helped to form or

shape. Thus during his 1961 journey to the United States, he spoke at the influential Carnegie Endowment and appeared at an ACOA rally alongside Senator Hubert Humphrey, the author James Baldwin and the Zambian leader, Kenneth Kaunda.[53] Mboya remained a valuable asset.[54]

Thus, despite London's shrill words, JFK did find time to meet with Mboya and Kaunda. They exchanged pleasantries, reliving their mutual success about the airlift, before Mboya issued a staunch defense of Kenyatta, who many in Washington thought remained the demonic brain behind "Mau Mau." Official Washington remained skeptical.[55]

But Mboya, a seeming master of timing, had arrived in Washington at the time that the catastrophe of the U.S. invasion of Cuba—the "Bay of Pigs" crisis—was unfolding, making more valuable an African ally who was not necessarily cozy and chummy with Moscow.[56] Mboya's clout was further revealed when he visited Liberia, the U.S. neo-colony. He was "welcomed here rather as a hero," said the British Ambassador, "and was copiously entertained…"[57]

Correspondingly, before Kenyan independence in December 1963, official U.S. policy was that Kenyatta had "not inspired confidence…" Presumably, he was not effective in the stated "objectives" of "prevention of Communist penetration" in the region; nor had he been helpful in squashing the "extremist wing" of KANU, "which has enjoyed Communist financial support" and, thus, forcing the "moderates led by Tom Mboya" to form a "separate party [or] allying themselves with KADU [Kenya African Democratic Union]. Kenyatta, now past seventy, appears to be weak, vain, poorly informed and opportunistic…" There was fear about the "status of the British bases in Kenya whose usefulness to the British in the Middle East area" was evident; "the port of Mombasa can accommodate a large mixed naval force and has very substantial repair services" and Kenyatta—who had "been particularly sensitive to the attention shown by Americans to Tom Mboya"[58]—seemingly tied to Odinga, was seen as a threat.

Thus when Kenyatta was invited to Washington in 1962 at the behest of G. Mennen Williams, the liberal Michigander appointed as the nation's top diplomat in Africa, opponents described him contemptuously as "the head of the Mau Mau" and termed the journey a "terrible" idea. The well-respected insider, George Ball, said simply, "we can't do this…"[59] Williams insisted, however.[60]

JFK sought to add weight to his words with his appointment of Williams, known to be close to the UAW and the NAACP and, thus, a domestic complement of Mboya—though his reluctance to shun Kenyatta was suggestive of his ecumenicism. He found an African bureau at the State Department that was derided as "'Skid Row'" with shabby furnishings and cramped offices in an otherwise elegant Foggy Bottom. He also found that African diplomats in Washington suffered daily humiliation as they sought to navigate Jim Crow, which was an ongoing recruiting broadside for Moscow. African diplomats claimed that wives of U.S. officials often slipped on gloves before shaking their hands, which did not please them either. Seeking to square domestic Jim Crow with global realities, one U.S. official finally suggested that African diplomats wear a unique type of pin or button to indicate they were not the despised African Americans—the vector of hostility since they represented lost fortunes in the former Slave South.

Other officials derided Williams, noting sourly that when he "'saw a band of black baboons beating tom-toms [he] saw George Washington.'" Under-Secretary of State, George Ball, chimed in by saying that African nations had "'names that sounded like typographical errors.'"

Kennedy, who had chaired the Senate Subcommittee on Africa, was determined to shake up the African bureau, which had only been created shortly before his election. Williams had quite a job ahead of him since he realized that U.S. stock in Africa rose and fell "'depending on the racial situation in America'"—which was parlous at best. To that end, he traveled tirelessly during his tenure, visiting the continent eleven times and touching down in every nation there—except South Africa. He was startled by the poverty he witnessed, noticing children in Uganda who had "'never eaten meat, eggs, fish, had never drunk milk…'"[61]

"I am a liberal," Williams declared, "I've been in the vanguard," so he felt himself eminently qualified to shake up U.S. policy toward Africa. He objected to the posting to Africa of personnel on the verge of retirement, placed out to pasture, and often bereft of the energy needed to enact reform. Williams was determined to blaze a new course or so he declared. When he visited Kenya in early 1961, he recalled that "the Embassy and I were particularly careful not to embarrass any of the Africans"—notably Mboya—"by enveloping them or showing too great signs of association." Mboya, however, was "sort of incorrigible in his own self-esteem and, well, when CIA people came to town, he went to the airport and, you know, met them"[62]—which only inflamed left-wingers like Odinga.

Upon arrival in Nairobi Williams also inflamed the settlers when he reportedly snubbed them and advocated a policy redolent of Marcus Garvey at his zenith—"'Africa for the Africans'."[63] Under Williams' leadership, affirmative action was taken to insure that African Americans were included on official delegations—including the plane crews—indicating how the need to woo Africa benefited Negroes.[64]

The meeting between Kenyatta and Williams began auspiciously when the Kenyan leader's chair collapsed and he fell heavily to the floor. Odinga, who was present, helped him to his feet. Williams seeking to break the ice after this metaphorical assertion of Washington's lack of support for him, remarked laughingly that he thought this accident would mean "'they were going to put me in alongside of you,'" referring to his recently concluded detention, which brought chuckles from all assembled.[65]

But the regime was not chuckling when Williams channeled Garvey. When he arrived in Northern Rhodesia and was laboring to explain his controversial remarks, a European rushed the podium and punched him in the face.[66] Larry Devlin, the CIA operative, apparently saw the bruised Williams in Congo and recalled almost gleefully that "friends took up a collection to help pay the assailant's fine. Apparently the total amounted to twice the amount of the fine and the Rhodesian sent Soapy a message inviting him to return and give him a chance to have a go at the other eye for another collection."[67]

It would not have been surprising if London had helped to pay the fine for the colonizer was equally displeased. He was "out of his depth" said their man in Dar es Salaam.[68] "He appeared to know less about Africa than might have

been hoped," said Sir R.G. Turnbull; he was "unpunctual in his engagements," not to mention "clumsy, uninformed and bumptious…"[69] In a "secret" dispatch, a leading colonial agent in Nairobi moaned that "the timing of his visit could not be worse for us"; besides at a critical social gathering Williams "spent more time with African politicians than with others," a blunder it was thought.[70] Back in London the House of Commons was in an uproar. Downing Street sought to "steer" this body "from anger into laughter," to defuse matters, but this "[would] not be easy."[71] Even Williams' U.S. handler in Nairobi was not sad to see him depart. "A high ranking American visitor is bound to be in trouble the minute he departs from comment on the charms of lions and zebras in this very touchy nation," said Richard Freund. The "Europeans feel embattled," he said sympathetically; "they control the press which is an instrument of the extremists among them" and they lit into Williams with vigor. "He might have left here with a certain distaste after his unpleasant experience with the press," he concluded, "and that distaste might even include me."[72]

Apparently a spouse of one of these "extremists" asked Mrs. Williams if the "mark on her forehead," a birthmark, "was where Tom Mboya had kissed her." Yet another extremist launched a 45 minute tirade against Mboya—in Mrs. Williams' presence—over Africans' alleged lack of appreciation for the supposed good deeds of colonizers and the ruin which independence would reputedly bring. He capped it off by accusing Williams of representing a nation that was the world's worst colonizer, since the United States had committed genocide against the indigenes.[73]

When the segregationist Senator from Louisiana, Allen Ellender traveled to Southern Rhodesia and expressed sympathies for apartheid, it was the turn of indigenes to seek a visage to crush. Mboya expressed these angry sentiments to JFK directly, articulating "most strongly" his "disgust and disappointment at the deliberate provocation…"[74] "Feelings among African leaders are running high," as a result of Ellender's gaffe, was the message provided to the Secretary of State.[75] Mboya demanded that he be not allowed to enter Kenya and the Consulate sought to assuage and evade simultaneously by telling the livid Luo leader simply that "your interest in Afro-American relations is one fully shared [by] my Government and myself…"[76]

Growing into his role as African statesman, Mboya spoke out vigorously on the Berlin crisis of 1961[77] but as a sign of the profound changes underway, the White House engaged him on a matter presumably beyond his portfolio,[78] as Kennedy chose to respond.[79]

Once Mboya told an anecdote about the nadir of colonialism in Kenya when a European customer poked her head into the office where he was sitting and working, looked around and said, 'Ah, nobody here.'" With liberation from colonialism now looming, Kenya—nor Kenyans, particularly Mboya—were no longer invisible.[80]

But this very importance of Kenya—and Kenyans—was tremendously unsettling to those who valued colonialism and in the United States this meant Robert Ruark in the first place. "Heralded as an authority on African affairs," according to the *Miami Herald* in the Spring of 1961, he adopted "an extremely dim view of

a rosy future for Africans…" Not terribly enlightened, Ruark argued, "'General Motors doesn't let wives totter through offices. Why should I?'" So he barred his spouse from his fashionably appointed office in his residence in Spain—perhaps that is why they divorced.[81] He was also a heavy smoker and heavy drinker—both alcohol and Coca-Cola, a dozen of the latter per day when he was engaged in his two-finger typing, shooting for twenty pages per day. He was subject to gaining twenty pounds during the course of writing a novel. His novel, *Something of Value*, set a record when he received $300,000 from MGM for cinematic rights that was reputedly the largest single price ever paid for a novel to date. It sold over 120,000 hard cover copies in the United States and an unprecedented 140,000 hard cover copies in Britain, where 15,000 was considered large; it was eventually translated into about a dozen languages. His regularly published journalistic efforts—like his novels—shaped ineffably the image of the African as violent, primitive, atavistic. He also had migrated into participation in television where he was a valued "talking head,"[82] a trend that contributed to his being able to augment his ever bulging Swiss bank accounts and bags of fan mail.

The immodest Ruark admitted, "I don't know what it is about my books that makes them 'so popular with Americans'," though its dovetailing with the predilections of many Euro-Americans may have been a reason.[83] His "research" often consisted of desultory voyages and recycling weakly sourced material appearing in the popular press.[84] Thus, as Kenya moved ever closer to liberation from decades of colonial misrule, it was inevitable that Ruark would capitalize upon this epochal trend by trotting out yet another novel. Ironically, the film studio, MGM, probably made the wisest criticism of his new novel, *Uhuru*, when it claimed that it was a copy of *Something of Value* and thus it owned the cinematic rights.[85]

The title came from the Swahili word for freedom and the book itself was pockmarked by the promiscuous use of a particular racial epithet known far and wide in Black America. Ruark's agent, who objected to the "predisposition to accept emerging African democracies in terms of the thinking of the [NAACP]," also argued in a masterpiece of illogic that the novelist "'does not hate niggers.'"[86] As Kenya stood on the cusp of independence, this bestselling novel set an all-time record for prepublication prices paid on a single book written by any writer, apart from purely personal memoirs such as Eisenhower's or Churchill's.[87]

As such, it is troubling—nay, frightening—to contemplate this novel which, once again, portrays Africans as murderous as it flirts with genocide as the way out. As is said at one point, "my mistake was I didn't kill enough of them when it was legal. If the settlers had not had a free hand, if there weren't any United Nations; if the Americans hadn't pulled the rug out from under in Egypt in '56 when we had Nasser on the run; if old Jomo hadn't been so clever that he came quickly when they arrested him; if they might have quietly shot Kenyatta"—then things might have turned out differently. There was repetitive hostility displayed to what one character angrily termed, "'yes, damn it niggers! Shiftless, sneaking, thieving niggers! I hate them…I hate them all!," and, it was added superfluously, "we will make a systematic extermination of your people which will amount to more bloodshed than Lumumba ever caused against the

Balubas!…we will retaliate more heavily than we did in the beginning of the Mau Mau emergency. We will kill you as the Portuguese kill in Angola—by the village!…we will kill you by the thousands and destroy your lands in less than a week." Don't even dream, he suggested, that Europeans were incapable for as one character proclaimed, "'a great many of us have had a lot of recent practice killing Kikuyu…there is nothing a Kikuyu can do in the bush that we cannot do better. There is nothing a Kikuyu can do outside the bush that we cannot do better. A few score of us could wipe out the tribe, given enough arms and ammunition. We'll re-colonize the bloody place if they leave us alone" since "the only way to fight any sort of terrorism is to do it better. We only killed ten thousand [*sic*] of them in the recent [conflict]. We didn't burn villages or fire crops or kill many women or children. That's because we were hampered by the military. We only went after the gangs—and they were mostly male. Given a free hand, I rather imagine I could do for ten thousand all by myself, by the grace of God, luck and weather, if I didn't have a proper army to tell me what to do and not to do.

Ruark also linked his homeland to his bloodlust, noting the "bitter hatred of the American Negro for the white American…twenty million transplanted Africans who want nothing of their own Africa, all ready to rise and strike down the white man in America…" He sensed that suffrage rights for Negroes would have consequence for Africa, observing: "a dirty dollar to Africa is a bloc vote in Harlem…" But it was Africa that gripped his fevered imagination and not just Kenya but also Congo. "Africa is now the Congo," he wailed. "The Congo is all Africa." Copious tears were shed in ink on the page as "thousands of Belgians fleeing in disheveled unshaven panic from the uprisings in the Congo [sought exile]. More than six thousand of them, homeless and frightened in Nairobi alone. So very dirty and homeless and hungry; their children fretting, wearily, irritably; their money worthless; themselves so helpless that the white schools had to be closed in order to make shelter for them. Food had to be given them or they would starve."

Women took it on the chin from Ruark—"a woman lived only in her ovaries, and her thoughts were all ovarian if she bothered to form thoughts at all"—while Red Russia was the eminence grise behind it all: "in those old days there was fanciful talk around the cookfires that some day the Red Strangers, the wa-Russias, would come to Kenya to set the black man free. And when the wa-Russias came to drive the white bwanas from the land, every native would share the bwanas' fine land in the Highlands, and then every man would own a wireless and a motor-car…"[88]

Reflecting the perceived inevitability of liberation, the *New York Times* was more restrained in its praise of this novel, compared to his previous one. Yes, Ruark "knows his way about East Africa as well as any American," but this doorstop of a book was "not, however, a book for the squeamish, the generous, or the progressive. The message of this muscular, opinionated novel is clear: Kenya is going to the 'Wogs' and Mr. Ruark doesn't approve…" The book displays, it was said, "a distrust if not a contempt for the overwhelming majority of its people," as "the Kenya he wants to preserve is the Kenya in which the races lived in a horse-and-rider relationship with men like himself firmly in the saddle…no doubt Mr. Ruark regrets the passing of the old Kenya as much as his characters do…"[89]

Apparently Lisbon disagreed since Ruark was told that the fascist and colonialist government was seeking to "attract producers to make pictures in Portugal or in Portuguese overseas territories." Lisbon recognized that the "production of foreign motion pictures in Spain has given them a propaganda for tourists that they could not buy in the magazines and newspapers, radio or TV, in the thousands of cinemas around the world," which "created a new image of Spain under Generalisimo Franco"—perhaps Ruark could do something similar for the equally odious "Dr. Salazar?"[90]

Ruark was ecstatic, morphing immediately into a movie producer casting his net for the A-list actors, Peter O'Toole and Katharine Hepburn, even Lena Horne and having Yul Brynner "put on the burnt cork" which would "break the resistance of Negro actors like Sidney Poitier" on "playing villain black men in this day and age…" The highly popular Ruark had managed to snag a spectacular "33% of the distribution gross…"[91] Ruark, who had avoided Kenya when his novel *Something of Value* was being filmed (for which he did the screen adaptation)[92] was much more enthusiastic about his latest blockbuster, perhaps because he was increasing his network of contacts to Portugal and was getting feelers from Rhodesia and South Africa.[93] When mega-Director Otto Preminger "pulled out of the picture in the time earned fashion of all movie people", Ruark shed no tears since his book was "the biggest publishing event since the Bible…"[94]

Ruark's prolificacy had brought him acclaim—he was "the most controversial author ever to set a novel in Kenya" it was said.[95] When the Ford Foundation offered an appointment to the spouse of Ruth Beleson, she had second thoughts after reading Ruark's column, "Dark Days ahead for Kenya," asserting that "our respective families and friends who saw the newspaper article have besieged us with phone calls to reconsider."[96] Weighing the possibilities, she wondered if "they have learned something from the Congo"; the "trouble as I see it, if there is to be trouble [it] will come as a result of the native government seizing white settlers' lands after independence…"[97]

17

Conclusion: Mau Mau in Harlem?

It was dusk in Nairobi on December 12, 1963. Peter Koinange had his old college friend, St. Clair Drake by the arm when the Union Jack was lowered for the last time at State House, signaling the long-awaited arrival of Kenya's liberation from colonialism. The band was playing "Abide with Me Fast Falls the Eventide, the Darkness Deepens, Lord with Me Abide." Then Koinange nudged Drake and whispered, "These people insult you even [when] they're leaving." He motioned toward Ralph Bunch in the distance, who had ascended to the highest level of the United Nations and who alienated further old friends of the left when he seemingly did not object to the attack on the now heralded Patrice Lumumba of Congo. Kenyatta's daughter was escorting the spouse of this martyr for the sacred cause of African liberation. Then Koinange and Drake visited Kenyatta, who took them into a room, gave Drake a souvenir necktie and brought a cold brew to lubricate an animated discussion. This was the first time Drake had met Kenya's Founding Father and first leader. Subsequently, Drake was the only foreigner to accompany Kenyatta and Koinange when they traveled to the edge of the forest to accept the surrender of the last "Mau Mau" holdouts, some of whom were to be bitterly disappointed with independent Kenya's evolution.

It was clear to Drake that the newly installed government expected friendly Negroes to "give them some clues as to what white American organizations they could trust not to exploit or subvert them. The incoming Minister of Education," for example, "interviewed" Drake "at length about the Peace Corps"—though it was unclear if Negroes at the highest level, who had mostly acquiesced to the isolation of Du Bois and Robeson were in a position to contradict (or even willing to challenge) their government or the Euro-American ruling elite more generally. Still, Drake continued, "[U.S.] Embassy personnel suspected" the allegiances of these Negroes "and some did not conceal their hostility toward Black Americans who were there as guests of the government rather than as official U.S. representatives…"[1] It seemed that with liberation, returning to extreme relevance after a semi-hiatus was the age-old notion that Negroes could not be trusted to uphold Washington's imperial ambitions.

Changing for the better was the atmosphere in Nairobi. When Mboya's union headquarters was opened in mid-1960, the U.S. consul general was struck by the appearance of "floats, tribal dancing, jazz music and general hullabaloo"; there were "thousands" who "mobbed every inch of space" with the air filled with "good natured cries in Swahili." There was an "unsatisfied hunger of the African inhabitants of Nairobi for popular gatherings and amusements," which "occur so [in]frequently in the staid atmosphere of this essentially British city."[2] This was to change, as the gray joylessness of a settler colonial regime was supplanted by the colorful excitement of liberation.

Washington may have wondered why the new Nairobi government invited personally Drake, Thurgood Marshall, and James Baldwin, among others, for this festive celebration. Somewhat quizzically, the Washington official, Seymour Claflin wondered about these "lucky exceptions" who were "to receive free air passage…" Also invited but not at government expense were George Houser, Walter Reuther, Maida Springer-Kemp, Martin Luther King, Jr., Irving Brown, Jackie Robinson, Adam Clayton Powell, and Sidney Poitier. Washington knew that the "Independence Celebrations Committee was aware that Paul Robeson" was to be found in East Berlin "but not knowing his address sent his invitation c/o Kwame Nkrumah, Accra," which was appropriate though it was thought that "Osagyefo [Nkrumah] will not be pleased by the implications underlying this three-cornered association"[3]—Nkrumah's overthrow less than three years later, like Lumumba's murder, was to signal that only the kind of neo-colonialism that Kenya was to pursue would be allowed. That Houser was not invited at government expense may have been telling as well, for prior to independence the resistance asked if the NAACP "would be interested in sponsoring an American trip for Jomo Kenyatta"; apparently, said Association leader, Gloster Current, "Kenyatta's followers are disillusioned with the American Committee for Africans [*sic*]" and "they would prefer the [NAACP] to sponsor him…"[4]

For Ruark's exiting head-slap administered forcefully on liberated Kenya was also a signal and was taken that way by the emerging new Nairobi. "I just got out of Kenya by the skin of my teeth," said Ruark, "hurriedly avoid[ing] the serving of libel action papers by Mr. James Gichuru, who [may] not like to remember that he was once a Mau Mau. I learned later by the Associated Press that formal orders for my detention had been issued…" Ruark also had irked the powerful religious leader, "the Aga Khan" who did not "love me since I took India apart in [newspaper] columns…"[5] Emotions were "running so high," thought Richard Freund, the U.S. delegate in Nairobi, "particularly among African Ministers. These feelings [were] engendered not only by [his] recent book," which "specifically mentioned Kenyatta, Mboya, Ngala and Gichuru" but also his "television series broadcasts and series [of] syndicated articles in U.S. press…" Ruark who was on safari with a group of wealthy Texans in the Northern Frontier District,[6] when this controversy erupted, was suspected by Washington of being a provocateur: it was all a "cleverly contrived public relations move to invite his expulsion and then exploit [the] event for increasing world book sales," which eighteen months before independence had exceeded "two hundred thousand,"[7] not to mention pricey full-page ads in the *New York Times*.[8]

Going into independence, Kenya was being buffeted by writers of various stripes, eager to take a swing at the eminently successfully anticolonial resistance and, presumably, capitalize on the market that Ruark's example exemplified. The scholar, Richard Leakey, born in 1944 in Kenya to settler parents, recalls being called a "nigger lover" and "bullied," while observing that "at the time of independence, few other Europeans shared my [non-racial] views"; indeed, he noted mournfully the existence of "many white Kenyans who've been unable to shake the colonial legacy…I often wonder why they stay in Kenya…"[9]

They found a kindred spirit in Martha Gellhorn, better known to some as the spouse of the philandering Ernest Hemingway, who too had profited from portraying Kenya, as he sated his basest lusts. "I believe he loves me, and he believes he loves me," she once said wistfully[10]—before their divorce, of course. Born in 1908 to a prosperous liberal family—her father was an eminent doctor and her mother crusaded for women's suffrage and reform—Gellhorn was often to be found abroad. Love for Africa—and Kenya—was another thing altogether. Arriving in Cameroon in 1962 she compared the indigenes favorably to African Americans—her roots were in St. Louis—since the former were "very pleasant, unlike U.S. Negroes, who have plenty of reason to be surly and usually are." Arriving in Chad, she spent a morning with a U.S. official, "a very nice man, half Negro, who no doubt was selected for his job to prove to African blacks that all men are equal in the [United States]." Pursuing the formidable challenge of crossing the continent from west-to-east by land, she perked up decidedly—as many Europeans did—upon reaching Kenya just as independence was dawning. "Slowly the earth becomes green, then greener" and the "land seemed livable, the first hint that Africa might be more than an endurance contest. No other airport had looked like this…" Caught up in the rapture of it all, she mused that the "sky performed the way I had longed for it to do; it went up forever. Soft air, warmed by a high clear sun." Yes, she said exuding happiness, "Nairobi weather is the best you can get" with "stylish shops and gleaming cars," it was a "beguiling little city that felt rich and happy, made to order for white residents and high-class tourists…" Among her own, she "suddenly…realized there was no noxious human stench" and, thus, she "had fallen in love with the land and sky, the fauna and flora, the weather of East Africa. This adoration of the natural world did not extend to mankind in Africa or its differing ways of life."[11]

That was for sure—though once she took up residence in Kenya, her opinions soured further. She wondered how Isak Dinesen had written about Africa so composedly since she felt "greasy, swollen and infected. She could not overcome her repugnance at the reeking Africans she met. Was it the climate," she was thinking, "or the lack of soap…that accounted for an odor that seemed to be a mix of urine and perspiration…" Reciprocally, she discovered that "Africans thought whites had a revolting smell-something akin to rotting corpses…"[12] At one point, she groaned in disgust that she was "dead tired of my incompetent slaves."[13] Like Europeans past and present, she seemed more captivated by the wildlife and foliage than the humans in Kenya, "entranced" as she was by the "flights of flamingoes," the "grazing zebras and antelopes," the "forests

of bamboo" amidst "banks of brilliantly coloured flowered creepers; where she could see wart hogs which made her laugh, and giraffe, the animals she liked best of all, pale and creamy and lightly marked, invisible against the thorn trees…" She visited Karen Blixen's house and suggested to Adlai Stevenson that Washington should buy it from its current owners and turn it into the residence for the nation's first ambassador in independent Kenya; for herself, she moved near Lake Navaisha where she resided though finding Africans "unbearably 'stupid,'" as she feared they would make a "sewer" out of the continent that she had come to love.[14]

Unavoidably, the mutual olfactory invasion experienced by Gellhorn and her African interlocutors contributed to more than a scent of hostility that landed on the shores of the United States itself. Increasingly, Africans had come to couple their demand for independence with what Dr. Kiano of Kenya—who was educated in the United States—called for: eradication of "remaining racism in the United States."[15] Washington trapped in a competitive Cold War vortex with Moscow had to respond—somehow—by passing civil rights legislation, eyeballing maliciously figures such as Orval Faubus and, generally, trying to at least paint the lipstick of equality on the beast that was Jim Crow. This trend reached a crescendo during the presidential term of John F. Kennedy (who was murdered in Jim Crow Texas days before Kenyan independence), which helps to explain his eagerness—as well as that of his successor—in pushing for democratizing measures at home.

Kenyatta's Spring 1963 message questioning the severe maltreatment of demonstrating Negroes in Birmingham was accorded "heavy play [in] all newspapers" said the Nairobi Consulate. The "U.S. image [was] suffering greatly" as a result. There were "inflammatory headlines" for example, "Riots Flare in U.S. South" and "infants sent to jail." Kenyan television was accused of broadcasting a "vile clip from British Commonwealth International News Agency (BCINA)"—London's revenge no doubt—"emphasizing police dogs and fire hoses." There were countless "pictures of fire hoses, dogs, arrests" that "appeared" regularly. The question hanging was "how to counter damage [to] our image…"[16] Africans were also unwilling to look in the opposite direction as Washington and Pretoria embraced. Just after this major flap about Birmingham, Julius Nyerere came to Washington and according to Mboya his visit was "primarily intended [to] sound out just how far" the Administration was "prepared [to] back their actions" targeting apartheid[17]—not far, he came to find.

Yet a dynamic had been created where, perhaps, Washington could gain breathing space or valuable chits by making concessions to Negroes while buying time to stave off action against apartheid. JFK was told bluntly months before his assassination that "Africa and, to a lesser degree, Asian feelings about South Africa's apartheid policy are becoming steadily stronger."[18]

That they were. One reason was demonstrated in the Spring of 1963 when Kenyan students attending Nkrumah's alma mater—Lincoln University in Pennsylvania—were joined by classmates hailing from Ethiopia, Tanganyika, and Nigeria in a protest at a segregated theatre in neighboring Wilmington,

Delaware.[19] Africans could not ignore Jim Crow when their finest sons and daughters were being battered by this kissing cousin of apartheid. Thus, Uganda's leader, Milton Obote, sent an open letter to JFK deploring Jim Crow, a protest which may have been driven by his own unfortunate encounter with U.S. apartheid.[20]

A competitive dynamic had influenced African leaders' response to Jim Crow, as they sought to outdo one another in denouncing racism, as "Obote undoubtedly wished [to] build up his personal stature as [a] liberal and fighter for civil rights," said the legation in Kampala; he "was probably influenced by [the] fact [that] Kenyatta had already sent [an] open letter to President regarding Birmingham . . ." The "tone" of "Obote's message" was "most harsh," it was added balefully.[21] Dirty tricks were now being played on Washington, presumably by France, as the U.S. Embassy in Monrovia received a phony issue of *Newsweek*, "entirely devoted [to] news photos" of "racial violence in [the] [United States]"—"prevent any unnecessary attention [to] this publication" was the firm instruction dispatched.[22]

U.S. intelligence fretted about the "impact of U.S. racial tensions on Africa" in a report sent to "all the African posts . . ." The "elite, even in rural areas are aware of the problem and follow it closely," it was observed with sobriety; thus, "our posts in Sierra Leone and even Central African Republic report a high degree of identification" with African Americans; "both Bangui and Ibadan, however, report that identification is *less* where there has been a significant contact with American Negroes"; thus, "all agreed" that "stepped up recruitment" of this latter group into the ranks of the State Department "was a necessity." Thus, just as the imperative to extend scholarships to Africans led directly to openings created in universities for African Americans—as motivated administrators moved to recruit those that theretofore they had hardly given a thought to, something similar occurred when Foggy Bottom encountered an Africa skeptical of Jim Crow.[23]

And with their increasing education driven by independence imperatives, African intellectuals were gaining a less than rosy view of the United States, which too created pressure for ditching Jim Crow. The preeminent Kenyan writer, Ngugi wa Thing'o in his dramatization of the life of national hero, Dedan Kimathi, invokes the United States negatively, particularly in the guise of a villainous banker; the playwright was struck by the "huge highways [and] skyscrapers" in the United States, as well as the "tremendous leaps in science and technology"—but "in the midst of these achievements was the appalling poverty of workers especially those in the black and Puerto Rican ghettos," along with the "Indian reservations." Ruark is listed as one of several "colonial writers" who have done ill to Kenya's reality.[24] According to this leading intellectual, "by and large the Afro-American masses have been the greatest victim of two hundred years of the growth of American capitalism . . ." He criticized Booker T. Washington's autobiography as a "fawning song in praise of social and mental subjugation, self-humiliation and self-abjection," it is a "hymn in praise of the consciousness, the world view of the master, the slave driver, the colonizer, the imperialist, the oppressor."[25]

The same could not be said for African Americans who had had their fill of Jim Crow and often looked to Kenya for inspiration. Such was the case in Cleveland in the 1960s when the air was filled with talk of "armed resistance" and discussion of formation of "rifle club[s]," much of which emerged from the "Jomo Kenyatta Freedom House."[26] Such talk spread far beyond the confines of this Ohio metropolis, however, as the activist then known as Stokely Carmichael announced boldly that "we are moving into open guerilla warfare in the United States."[27] He acknowledged that "to most whites, Black Power seems to mean that the Mau Mau are coming to the suburbs at night," while his antipode, W. J. Simmons, of the white supremacist "Citizens Council of America" said warningly of his antagonist, the Louisiana-based Deacons for Defense, as if he were trying to reassure himself, "I don't care how many guns that bunch of black Mau Maus has, they don't have the prerequisite—guts."[28] Carmichael, who later took the name "Kwame" in honor of Nkrumah and Ture, in homage to the founder of independent Guinea-Conakry, also popularized a slogan—"Black Power"—which led some "confounded white observers," according to one informed observer, to imagine a future suffused with "racial warfare." He was not alone: the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) also warned of "bloody race war."[29]

This was a spirit inspired by "Mau Mau." The former chair of the NAACP—Myrlie Evers-Williams—observed that her martyred spouse, Medgar Evers, viewed Kenyatta as a "hero." Though his NAACP abjured armed resistance, Medgar Evers, she recalls, "at that point in time…felt that the only way to solve the violence against his people was to respond with violence. It was something he deeply believed in, because he felt it wasn't going to change." Their first-born was given the name "Kenyatta" and they were routinely asked by their Negro neighbors, "how's the little Mau-Mau?," which was not inappropriate since the tyke's father "began to encourage people to buy arms."[30]

"Medgar and I grew up with very few heroes," recalls his brother, Charles Evers but it was during the 1950s they "found a new hero: Jomo Kenyatta," of whom they "learned all we could…in the papers, from friends, reports on shortwave radio…" Kenyatta "vowed to press on until Kenya was free and die if he had to. That inspired Medgar and me so much," he observed movingly. "Why not cross the line?" Why not launch armed struggle in their native Mississippi, inspired by the "Mau Mau." Evers' "Mau Mau in Mississippi would run like this: for every Negro the whites killed, I'd kill two whites back. I'd float around Mississippi, killing one white man a week. Kill one in Jackson, ride a bus to Clarksdale and kill one there too. Board the bus and kill another in Meridian or Tupelo. Roam the state, picking off the leading racist in each county. Find out where they lived and knock them down, one by one. Do each killing a different way. Poison a man's coffee here, stab a man there, shoot someone else. As a mortician, I knew a lot about how to make [men] die…" He "dreamed of killing thousands of whites"; they would "organize an army of Negro maids and cooks to poison white folks' coffee."[31] The NAACP Regional Director, Ruby Hurley, confirms that Medgar Evers "always wanted to go at it in Mau Mau fashion" and had plans for

a "Mississippi Mau Mau"[32]—a notion confirmed in the pages of the *New York Times*, which asserted that he had "toyed" with "the idea that the best way out of the Negro's dilemma was an armed, aggressive Mau-Mau type organization."[33] At one point in the 1960s, Charles Evers warned forebodingly, "we've got guns and we're going to fight back,"[34] while the press warned fearfully that "even small children" possessed "homemade bombs."[35]

The Evers brothers were beginning to consider more drastic alternatives as the Red Scare had served to destabilize militant alternatives provided by Robeson and Du Bois. In the resultant vacuum were arising various forms of nationalism. Roy Wilkins of the NAACP observed in 1958 that "for some time we have been aware of factors and forces working to enlist the American Negro in a sort of international anti-white crusade." This was "by no means new," he thought, since he recalled a time a time when "the Japanese hotels on the West Coast [were] known among Negroes as the only hotels which would accept Negro travelers. I remember staying in one in Seattle in 1921," he recalled, "almost twenty years before the 'white' Seattle hotels would take Negro guests," which helped to spur "American Negro sympathies" with Tokyo[36]—a resonant factor in the upcoming war. Now with the rise of the Nation of Islam, which was born amidst this earlier wave, this "anti-white crusade" was receiving a new birth of freedom.

Though the Evers brothers were associated with the NAACP, the "Mau Mau" motif was adopted most aggressively by the "Black Power" wing of the movement. London, which as a matter of course stressed the links between anticolonial resistance and the aspirations of African Americans had their premonitions confirmed when H. Rap Brown, the epitome of "Black Power" appeared at a press conference in New York City with his bodyguards festooned with caps bearing the words "Mau Mau."[37] Charles 37X Kenyatta, who was inspired by Malcolm X, spoke of how his mentor "often talked about the Mau Maus. That if any mean[ing] ful struggle ever comes in this country it's going to have to be around the bases like the Mau Maus in Kenya." Kenyatta, whose adopted surname was in homage to the Kenyan leader, argues, "I was the only Mau Mau," since "I had seen uprisings and studied them very closely…"[38] He headed a group called "Harlem's Mau Maus"[39] that armed itself with bayonets and machetes but nonetheless cooperated with the authorities in 1968 in the wake of the murder of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.[40] Once James Farmer, then well-known as an apostle of non-violence was strolling on a Harlem street, when—as he recollected later—"I encountered four dashiki-clad members of the 'Mau Mau'," comrades of Charles 37X Kenyatta; "the four who confronted me fingered the handles of the machetes on their belts and one of them said, 'we're coming downtown after you next, Farmer, because you got that white wife down there'" Farmer was aghast—"nobody would tell me who my wife would be," he proclaimed, while conceding that "those were scary days."[41]

Perhaps more frightening—and shedding light on Farmer's unfortunate confrontation—was the fact that Senator Richard B. Russell of Jim Crow Georgia (one of President Lyndon Johnson's closest allies in Washington), viewed "integration as an evil comparable to communism," according to his otherwise admiring

biographer.[42] With such alarming attitudes at the highest level, younger African Americans often saw little alternative to abrasive challenges to the status quo.

The historian James Meriwether affirms that "Mau Mau became embroiled in African American consciousness as a powerful symbol of resistance—both to white resistance [and to] to the traditional civil rights leadership," though the comrade of A. Philip Randolph, Bayard Rustin, "depicted the Mau Mau as combining voodoo with modern political strategy…"[43] The scholar, Robert Weisbord concurs, adding that "in their revolutionary rhetoric time and time again Afro-Americans have admiringly referred to Mau Mau, sometimes by design to instill fear in 'Mr. Charlie'…"[44] One white supremacist worried evocatively about "this dark and menacing thing that is pressing upon us," meaning the "non-white savages [who] are after our blood…" As he saw it, "after the white breeding grounds in Africa have been obliterated, and the resistance of whites in the U.S. South (and North) has been overcome—so that the possibility of the rise of another, regenerated USA in the USA itself has been nipped in the bud—it will then be the turn of Australia and New Zealand," he warned ominously.[45]

Even before independence, a Ford Foundation official detected in Kenya "mounting stress in the relationships between the Africans and the Europeans," which did not place the United States—with its ruling elite of European descent—in an advantageous position. Washington "must also learn," it was stressed, "not to expect gratitude for assistance," for this nation had "not yet established a sound psychological and moral basis for its programs in Africa:" Kenyans did "like Americans but having American technicians take over from the British on any significant scale is not appealing to them…"[46] The importance of Kenya to U.S. elite interests was ratified when the Ford Foundation sent a high-level delegation there months after independence. They emphasized the importance of Indian independence to Kenya, which hastened an ongoing trend of Africa viewing "almost every world issue and every domestic issue in terms of the COLOR problem."[emphasis-original] They worried about "the unwillingness to include white men in cabinets…"[47]

Even after independence, Robert Ruark continued to speak in apocalyptic tones, warning that young Africans were to be compared "roughly to the senseless gangs of New York," that is, "roving bands of young thugs, some graduates of the Mau Mau prison pens." Smith Hempstone, the future U.S. ambassador in Nairobi, said it was all a "throwback to witchcraft of the most obscene type, a return to bestiality," and behind the "savagery" was the "equally satanic influence of world communism…"[48] He may have had in mind the then emerging BPP, which was influenced by Marxism and not allergic to armed resistance to white supremacy and too can be seen as veritable offspring of the "Mau Mau."[49]

The currents that affected Black America and Africa alike did not die with independence. At the same time, awareness of the example of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. reached deep into the Kenyan countryside.[50] Though the Chicago based poet once known as Don L. Lee, may not have been inspired directly by "Mau Mau," this influential writer captured a strand of the spirit that was ascribed to

them when he announced provocatively that the "*major enemy of the Black race is the white race.*"[51] [emphasis-original]

Yet the message African Americans continued to derive from Kenya was one of militancy, including an example inspired by the man who was widely seen in Washington and London as the vector of Communist ambitions. For as Kenya was in the midst of celebrating independence, Oginga Odinga arrived in Atlanta—the capital of Jim Crow. On a Saturday evening in late December 1963, James Forman—a veteran civil rights worker—and his colleagues visited him at his hotel, brought him gifts, sang freedom songs and chanted "Uhuru"—freedom—with him. "Inspired by the visit," said Forman, "we [went] to a Toddle House restaurant for coffee. Seventeen [demonstrators]" were "arrested" in protest of Jim Crow regulations. "Some went limp," he added proudly, "and had to be dragged to the paddy wagon and some were bruised when dragged." This led to a new stage in the evolution of their militancy.[52] An irked U.S. State Department noted that the protesters "had already alerted wire services to plans and had available for distribution [a] handbill" entitled "Why Do We Picket," while referencing the fact that "African dignitaries have been snubbed." The tactful Odinga "made no comment,"[53] while the Kenya papers "all carried front page stories about [the] arrest of [the] 17" demonstrators he inspired.[54]

Charles 37X Kenyatta may have been present when Malcolm X, just before his murder, spoke at a church in Harlem near 131st Street and Seventh Avenue, where he endorsed the idea of a "Mau Mau" not only in Harlem but also in the United States as a whole.[55] Fannie Lou Hamer, another icon of this movement who appeared on platforms with him, also invoked Africa, wondering why Washington was so interested in protecting European settlers in the Congo but less interested in Mississippi Negroes seeking the ballot.[56]

Malcolm X's experience with Kenya and Africa was firsthand, however. After Kenyan independence, he made his way to Nairobi where he encountered the U.S. diplomat, William Atwood, who termed him a "not-so-welcome American visitor during this period of racial violence at home. I ran into him one afternoon at the Nairobi race track," where "Kenyatta and some of his cabinet were sitting in the former Governor's box, and I noticed a white man in the group." He was wrong: "moving closer, I saw it was Malcolm X" and "that night on Kenya television, he identified himself as 'the leader of 22 million American Negroes.'" Atwood was no fan of Malcolm X yet he was forced to realize that "what the Southern whites were doing was a propaganda windfall," not just for this visitor from New York but "even more" for the "Czech and Russian advisers" then present in Nairobi.[57]

Another disciple of Malcolm X, Robert F. Williams, was also taken with the notion of "Mau Mau" and was similarly aware of the value of global pressure on Washington. Once he declared that African Americans should "prepare to wage an urban guerilla war of self-defense" and have "kill-ins" and not "sit-ins."[58] Unlike many African Americans, he had spent considerable time abroad, having gone into exile in the 1960s after fierce confrontations with the authorities in Jim Crow North Carolina. "I was in Tanzania," he recalled, "where they had a

demonstration. It brings very much pressure to diplomats when they hear about the race issue, how people are being treated in this country; it's a lot of pressure on the government, more than most people hear realize…"[59] Williams was close to the mark, as suggested when a Ford Foundation executive remarked that he was "uneasy about the trends" in the region post-independence. "Black Power" incubated in the United States and influenced by "Mau Mau" had migrated in a circular path back to Africa, like a kind of high-life music from Ghana, as students in Dar es Salaam destroyed a U.S. flag and shouted "Black Power" and "Down with Imperialism."[60]

To that end, Williams was in frequent contact with Kenyans, some of whom tuned into his radio broadcasts from Cuba where he frequently denounced U.S. imperialism and berated Jim Crow and may have inspired students in Dar es Salaam. Before independence, Sammy J. Kents, a Kenyan refugee in Congo reached him in Havana. The settlers sought to jail him, he said, because of his political activism. It was on radio in Nairobi that he "announced to all people that all European farmers must leave farms to Africans and if they did not like [this] they had better leave Kenya, otherwise Revolution was going to take place and that could make them run away and leave all the farms to Africans." He wanted to travel to Cuba: "I know very well that you escaped from North Carolina," he said, "and I am sure you are the right man to help me," as he requested a "ticket from Leopoldville in Congo to Havana in Cuba…"[61] Later another Nairobi resident reached Williams in his latest residence in Peking and told him that the "American war can better be fought from Africa…"[62] So inspired, on one of his numerous broadcasts, Williams announced post-independence that "African youths and university students in Nairobi, handed a protest to the Charge d'affaires of the USA in Kenya after holding a protest demonstration in front of the U.S. Embassy"; they were "protesting the savage bombings of two villages in neighboring Uganda by U.S. war planes" and "demanded that the Yankees get out of the Congo."[63]

For the murder of Lumumba had not extinguished the flames of unrest emerging from the Congo. The U.S. diplomat, Michael Hoyt, asserts that for JFK this neighbor of Kenya was "the first battlefield in the struggle for hearts and minds of the Third World," which was a reflection of this President's "special interest in Africa"—for he "announced the selection of his Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs" before "he had selected his Secretary of State." By the time students were protesting in Nairobi, U.S. planes were being used in Congo on offensive missions. Hoyt agreed that the "anti-American character of the rebellion had become starkly evident." Later he was to appear on television in Chicago with the African American entertainer, Eartha Kitt and to his surprise found that "some American blacks viewed" things "differently than I did"; for example, Kitt "broke into a litany of how it was another example of whites killing blacks." Nevertheless, a white reporter asked him apprehensively were events in Congo a case of "revolt against whites or trying to get back at the United States"[64]—yet another example, if any were needed, that African Americans were not necessarily on board in support of

the dominant ethos of U.S. foreign policy, anticommunism, particularly as it related to Africa.

This concern was not squelched by the eruption that occurred in Zanzibar—Kenya's past neighbor in "British East Africa"—weeks after the independence celebration in Nairobi. There was "scant doubt," according to *Newsweek*, "that the revolt in tiny Zanzibar represented the first Communist take-over in an African country."[65] The man designated as the villain in this drama—Abdulla Kassim Hanga was, according to a leading U.S. diplomat, a "declared Marxist" who studied in Moscow and married the daughter of "American Marxist expatriates" there. Yet he "had a scholarship to study at the University of Illinois in 1957 but had been refused a visa by the American Embassy in London"—further confirmation, it was thought, of the value of the airlift engineered by Mboya. The diplomat in question, Don Petterson, was quite harsh in his evaluation of the British, signaling that this trend had yet to be terminated. London's officials "displayed a distinctly pukka-sahib attitude," they were "less than impressive" for "there was a lot of sexual—both heterosexual and homosexual—hanky panky going on," and "the predilection of one high official and some of his friends for Zanzibari boys was an open secret that elicited ribald comments but no official censure and little condemnation among the British community."[66]

The long-standing grievances borne by Africans was attracting the dedicated attention of Communists near and far, for it was in Algeria months after the discord in Zanzibar that Ernesto "Che" Guevara, the Cuban official—by way of Argentina—spoke in acid terms of the "brutal aggression" in Congo and the "ominous attack by American imperialism" against this nation.[67] This was to draw the celebrated Communist to Kenya's neighborhood, where he sought to assist the beset Africans, just as it inflamed U.S. anticommunists who were driven into apoplexy by these developments.[68] As the latter's comrades viewed things, "the winds of change," of which London spoke so eloquently, seemed to "blow from Peking these days," as they warned of the "Chinese Communist grand design for Africa…"[69]

So stimulated, Washington hurriedly increased staffing levels at their Nairobi Embassy, which was becoming a regional headquarters bent on halting this alleged Red offensive. When William Atwood arrived just after independence, he asserted that "Americans comprised the fourth largest community in Kenya after the Asians, the British and the Indians," and of the "nineteen hundred Americans in the country, fourteen hundred were missionaries and their families; the rest were mostly businessmen (twenty-one firms had regional offices in Nairobi), U.S. Government personnel and hundred-odd teachers" but "within two years the American population of Kenya would rise to 2600 and the number of U.S. firms to 52."[70]

Like a seesaw and as a continuation of an ongoing trend, as U.S. influence rose, that of its European allies was eroded. One espies this trend particularly in the strategic realm that is telecommunications. Right-leaning European settlers were skeptical of London in any case, at least stretching back to their fecklessness

in the face of Nasser's challenge in Cairo. There was "considerable mistrust towards U.K. institutions," in Salisbury, a "confidential" report to the BBC confided; "they doubted whether the BBC could or would meet their monitoring needs (for instance, they assumed that we could not report on the 'subversive activities' of Ghana vis-à-vis other Commonwealth territories…")[71] London was receiving it from both sides as newly independent African nations were "shedding its BBC re-broadcasts as fast as [they] can go," said Nairobi's Patrick Jubb. Their rationales were also troubling for Uganda, to cite one example, "dropped 'News about Britain' on the score that an independent country could only include such an item in its programmes if it also included news about America and news about Russia." Suggested was "news about the Commonwealth" as a sly way to get London's foot in the door.[72]

This was reflective of the sun finally setting on the Empire. A scant year before independence in Kenya a London trade commission found that "British companies are particularly well entrenched for the supply of many capital goods" in Nairobi, though there was a "natural tendency" in this East Africa nation to "want to break loose" from Britain's apron-strings as an emblem of true freedom. This trend was "being ardently—and even rather indiscriminately—nourished by some of our competitors' consulates here, not excluding those of our Western allies"—hint: the prime culprit's initials were U.S. There was a "measure of political pressure to buy 'not British'" and also a "conviction…among people of British origin that Britain is going down and out and that our workmen and industries simply cannot make the goods any longer"—it "always seems to come back to motor cars…"[73]

This was part of an overall bleak outlook for the once mighty Europeans. Speaking at Chatham House in Britain, Sir Ferdinand Cavendish-Bentinck, who had served the settler class so faithfully conceded three years before independence that there was a "lack of confidence among Europeans dealing with—and living in—Kenya"; there was "no market in land now in Kenya and investors are drying up…"[74] This was occurring as yet another Transatlantic spat was erupting, this one matching the august BBC against the upstart CBS based in Manhattan. Richard Salant of the latter entity was "sore and angry" about the competition between the two. This "elf-like, almost Martian figure, with bulging eyes and a restless face" was "short-tempered" and "lacks natural authority"; besides, he was "motivated by a persecution complex" which was ascribed to his "deep sense of inferiority"—his boss, Frank Stanton, telephoned "four times" while he was meeting with this unnamed and acidulous BBC official.[75]

The colonizers had much to contemplate, beyond their jousting with Manhattanites, for as London saw it, the much feared Odinga had continued—if not accelerated—his flirtation with the organized left. "He first sought financial and other help for himself and his political aspirations from American sources," said the High Commissioner in Nairobi, "but the Americans rejected his approaches. He then learned," it was said, "that they were backing instead his hated rival for leadership of the Luos, Tom Mboya. And that"—not any preexisting conceptions—"made him become anti-American." He also "found"

the British to be "very partial to Mboya" and "no doubt because Peking was much more financially generous than Moscow towards him, he gradually became more pro-Chinese than pro-Russian…" This official professed to "have known quite a selection of astonishing people in high places in Britain, Europe, America, Asia, the Antipodes and Africa—but never one quite like the clever, charming, endearing and wickedly crazy Oginga Odinga," who he found "mentally unbalanced"—an alleged factor that may have been driven by the real factor of the "assassination" of his comrade, Pio Pinto, a stalwart of the Asian community, which "may yet prove to have been the decisive blow to their joint efforts…"[76]

Visiting Ford Foundation officials blasted the "machinations of Oginga Odinga whose purse is filled with Chinese money used to 'corrupt' local politicians"; he was the conduit, when Mboya's airlift was challenged as African students went to "study in the USSR, China and Eastern European Communist lands…"[77]

Mboya was faring a mite better, as his careful tightrope walk seeking to maintain a respectful—though not hostile—distance from Moscow and Peking was not winning him adherents necessarily in Black America. Instead they were concerned when he came to Harlem and criticized mass migration of Negroes to Africa. He was noisily interrupted by a fusillade of eggs. Undaunted, he continued to insist that "in a fundamental way, Africans and Afro-Americans today find themselves in remarkably similar political and economic situations" and it remained true that "the independence movement in Africa has had a great impact on the civil rights movement in America, besides giving it a slogan," for example, freedom. For Washington "understood very well that it would have difficulty making friends in Africa so long as the black American remained subjugated." Given this obeisance to commonly held sentiment, why was Mboya booed, heckled and assaulted in Harlem? "Some of the Afro-Americans who spoke to me," he said dolefully, "were angry that our government had rejected a motion calling for automatic citizenship for any black American who wished to come to settle in Kenya…" After the forced lifting of the bonds of oppression, rather than being grateful, many African Americans were angry—angry at what they and their ancestors had been compelled to endure—and desired to escape North America post-haste, but, alas, Mboya nor Kenya were in no position to take on this immense challenge.[78]

Yet Kenya, cognizant of its ties over the years to Black America, went further down the road of Pan-Africanism than most, with a bill introduced in the legislature in 1968 which, if enacted, would have granted automatic citizenship to Africans in the diaspora, not to mention the creation of a Ministry of Pan-African Affairs, led by Koinange, which had a similar portfolio. Mboya led the charge against this bill, which is one reason he was assaulted so mercilessly by Harlemites. Yet, he could not stall a remarkable rise in interest among African Americans in all things East African, which has puzzled many contemporary commentators who thought they should have been intrigued instead by West Africa but these critics failed to grasp the impact of "Mau Mau." Thus, the use of Swahili became de rigueur, terms such as Uhuru and Harambee, names such as Malaika (the adopted name of my sister), and

Tamu became popular. There were demands to teach Swahili in schools and universities and the leading Black Panther, Raymond Hewitt, took the name "Masai."[79] The embodiment of the cultural nationalist trend embodied by this turn to East Africa—Maulana Karenga of Southern California—accelerated this tendency when he formed the "Simba Wachanga" or Young Lions, youth trained in martial arts and weaponry; this adherence to Swahili was also reflected in the continuing adoption of the late December holiday known as Kwanzaa.[80]

The otherwise sharp-witted Mboya chose not to ride this wave. Kenyatta proved not to be the closet Communist he was thought to be and proceeded to preside over the paradigmatic neocolonial state, in thrall to Washington and London, and a sink of corruption besides. The U.S. labor movement, which had been so keen in assisting the struggle against colonialism, was less concerned with neocolonialism. Thus, Mboya had reached a political cul-de-sac even before the tragic events of the Summer of 1969. For it was then that he was standing in the doorway of a shop, winding up a conversation he had been having with an old friend—when he was shot. His fall was broken by his friend reaching out, who pulled him back into the shop and shut the door. She did not emerge to call for help for some moments, which was probably understandable given the shock of it all, but in the suspicious and conspiratorial mood then reigning in Nairobi, her failure to take immediate action led to ugly talk.[81] Disquiet was stirred when London received word that Pretoria was "implicated in the murder of Tom Mboya."[82]

Less than a decade later, Kenyatta—a man who U.S. authorities had considered old many years earlier—passed away. Thurgood Marshall, whose service to Washington was rewarded when he ascended to the U.S. Supreme Court, represented his nation at the funeral, along with a son of then President Jimmy Carter. To the slow beat of a muffled drum, the silver-lined African oak casket was borne through the streets of Nairobi on a gun-carriage.[83] Jomo Kenyatta died again three years later—that is, a professional soccer player in St. Louis who had adopted the name of the heralded Kenyan, carrying on a trend in Black America, as he ditched his previous moniker: Gauntlett V. Rowe.[84] Donald Goines, the popular African American pulp novelist, initiated a "Kenyatta series," a number of novels in honor of the Kenyan leader involving an organization akin to the Black Panther Party and, in a sense, "Mau Mau."[85]

In the aftermath of the turmoil in Kenya, a son of the settler regime, Edmund Morris—whose father was a pilot that mapped out the early air routes over British East Africa—studied music and history for a year at Rhodes University in apartheid South Africa before moving to the United States in 1968 where he got work with the advertising concern, Ogilvy & Mather where he sang the praises of salad dressing. From that inconsequential perch he migrated to becoming the official biographer of U.S. president Ronald Reagan.[86] Another U.S. president, Bill Clinton, indicated that he had imbibed Kenya's role in the lexicon when he was negotiating with his then political adviser, Dick Morris, about a fee and interpreted his words as a threat to leave: "I can't stand when you do that," said the then president, "you know I need you and you negotiate by threatening me. Don't

Mau Mau me."[87] It was during the height of influence of the BPP that the popular journalist and novelist, Tom Wolfe, facilitated the introduction of "Mau Mau" as a verb into the language, as a synonym for the fierce aggressiveness that the BPP represented.[88]

With the passing of Kenyatta, Kenya's role as a neocolonial surrogate for U.S. imperialism in the region did not cease. In some ways the toehold that Washington had wrested in Nairobi was a clear and present danger for the continent as a whole. In 2007 the U.S. pharmaceutical giant, Pfizer, was accused by Nigeria of taking advantage of a 1996 meningitis epidemic to test an experimental drug without authorization or the full understanding of the families involved—allegedly contributing to the deaths of some children and the worsening conditions of others.[89] What was remarkable about this macabre scenario was that it was not new. For it was precisely a half-century earlier that Pfizer began questionable clinical trials in Kenya, facilitated by the settler regime, allegedly in pursuit of cures for "ascaris and other intestinal nematode infections… roundworm disease" and other maladies.[90]

On the other hand, Nairobi's historic role as a citadel of Anglo-American influence has continued with the latest wrinkle being call-centers or employees hired to respond to telephone inquiries from the United States through the use of high-speed DSL lines.[91] This influence can also be measured by the countless churches that line the nation's many pot-holed roads. Taking advantage of this has been the fabulously wealthy African American cleric, T.D. Jakes, who has taken the nation under his wing. In 2005 he drew nearly 1 million people to Uhuru Park in central Nairobi, outdrawing most political rallies. Many had come from the neighboring slum, Kibera, reportedly the largest slum on a continent replete with them, containing outhouses, garbage-strewn dumps and flimsy shacks. Yearning for hope, many Kenyans have termed Jakes "Our Joseph" and have rallied to his message of "self-empowerment."[92] He arrived in Nairobi with a party of 400 and a choir of 140, as the flock to which he administered rivaled that attracted by Pope John Paul II in 1980.[93] His presence was an indication that the relationship between Africans and African Americans had devolved from the heady days of Robeson and Du Bois preaching a different kind of emancipation.

The image of "Mau Mau's" fearsomeness had not dissipated after one of the first Kenyan students airlifted to the United States—Barack Obama, Sr.—had fathered a son in Hawaii. The Euro-American grandmother of the future U.S. president remained "hysterical" about Kenya and was certain that her daughter would have her "head chopped off" if she were to visit this East African nation.[94] The U.S. president recognized that his very existence was predicated on the sharp clashes—for example, those that embroiled the former Slave South—that motivated the United States to offer scholarships to Africans that brought his father to Hawaii[95] and led to the like response by many other universities who chose to admit Negroes to their hallowed halls. Yet these monumental changes had their origins in the forests, farms, hills and streets of Kenya, as what came to be known as "Mau Mau" sent shockwaves rippling across the oceans.

Figure 5 Portrait of Paul Robeson.

Source: Courtesy of Library of Congress, Prints & Photographs Division, Carl Van Vechten Collection, [LC-USZ62-59725].

Paul Robeson, the leading African American actor, singer, and political activist, once shared a London flat with the father of Kenyan independence, Jomo Kenyatta. However, the coming of the Cold War and McCarthyism, which marginalized Robeson, also crippled the U.S. movement in solidarity with anticolonialism in Kenya.

Notes

Introduction

1. William W. Baldwin, *Mau Mau Man-Hunt: The Adventures of the Only American Who Has Fought the Terrorists in Kenya*, New York: Dutton, 1957, 18, 49, 98, 174.
2. *New York Times*, June 12, 1955.
3. The militant African opposition in Colonial Kenya was denoted as "Mau Mau," not least by those who fought them. They have also been referred to as the Land and Freedom Army. The origin of the term "Mau Mau" is contested. See e.g., George Bennett, "Revolutionary Kenya: The Fifties, a Review," *Race*, 8 (Number 4, 1967): 415–420, 415, MSS/10/87, *Kenya National Archives–Nairobi:* hereafter noted as *KNA*: According to this author, the first African who disclosed the existence of the liberation forces in a police station in Naivasha, Kenya, asserted, "'I have been given MUMA,' an oath. The European being neither able to pronounce nor spell [the term] correctly created his own pronunciation… 'Mau Mau'." But see P. Godfrey Okoth, *United States of America's Foreign Policy toward Kenya, 1952–1969*, Nairobi: Gideon S. Were Press, 1992, 1: "Mau Mau" writes this author is a "garbled expression referring to a repetition of the word 'uma' or 'get out'" Note also the existence of the "Mau Escarpment," an essential part of the topography of Kenya. Beryl Markham, whose writings about Kenya helped to bring this nation to a wider audience in the North Atlantic community, spoke wistfully about the "slopes of the Mau." See Beryl Markham, *West with the Night*, Surrey, UK: Virago, 1984 [First published in 1942], 136. Max Yergan, an African American politico argued that Mau Mau means "quickly, quickly." See Testimony of Max Yergan, February 20, 1953, Record Group 46, Records of the U.S. Senate, Internal Security Subcommittee of the Senate Judiciary Committee, Executive Session Transcripts, Box 19, *National Archives and Records Administration–Washington, DC:* hereafter noted as *NARA-DC* It was reported that a journalist with the *New York Daily News* said: Mau Mau means "'the hidden ones'. Now you know." See "Kenya News," September 1956 (MAA), 2/5/19, *KNA*; a Phoenix newspaper spoke of Douglas Hertz, an elderly retired owner of a professional football team who reputedly introduced to the United States the "'Mau Mau bird—a wild white guinea hen of Kenya'…" See "Kenya News," January 1957, ARC (MAA), 2/5/219, *KNA*.
4. *New York Times*, January 6, 1957.
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6. Notes on Trip to Kenya, circa January 1938, Box 63, *Ralph Bunche Papers, University of California-Los Angeles*.
7. See e.g., Segregation between Blacks and Whites in British East Africa, 1917–1919, Room 2, Shelf 1281, Box 45, PC/Coast/1/1/367, *KNA*; Rules on Segregation of Races, Piece Dates 1918, Room 2, Shelf 1284, Box 54, PC/Coast/1/3/118, *KNA*.

8. See e.g., Gerald Horne, *Black and Red: W.E.B. Du Bois and the Afro-American Response to the Cold War, 1944–1963*, Albany: State University of New York Press, 1986.
9. Louis E. Lomax, *When the Word Is Given: A Report on Elijah Muhammad, Malcolm X and the Black Muslim World*, Cleveland, OH: World, 1963, 150.
10. George Breitman, ed., *Malcolm X Speaks: Selected Speeches and Statements*, New York: Pathfinder, 1989, 106.
11. See e.g., Gerald Horne, *From the Barrel of a Gun: The U.S. and the War against Zimbabwe, 1965–1980*, Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2001, passim.
12. European Residential Area, DC/NGONG/4, Piece Dates 1953, Room 2, Shelf 1730, Box 2, *KNA*. At the same site, see also: European Housing Area, CS/2/10/51, Room 3, Shelf 2944, Box 58 [no date listed].
13. Mombasa European Schools, CA/3/42, Piece Dates 1931–1957, Room 6, Shelf 4625, Box 4, *KNA*.
14. European Cemetery, PC/Coast/ 1/12/195, Piece Dates 1918–1927, Room 2, Shelf 1296, Box 90, *KNA*.
15. Caroline Elkins, *Imperial Reckoning: The Untold Story of Britain's Gulag in Kenya*, New York: Henry Holt, 2005, xvi.
16. George Padmore, *Pan-Africanism or Communism*, Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1971, 233. Of course, North Africans might well disagree with this opinion: See e.g., Matthew Connelly, *A Diplomatic Revolution: Algeria's Fight for Independence and the Origins of the Post–Cold War Era*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2002.
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18. *Washington Post*, March 22, 1959.
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22. Anderson, *Histories of the Hanged*, 79.
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63. Increase in Europeans Living in British East Africa, Warning to Indigenes Visiting Townships to Dress Decently, PC/Coast/1/10/175, Piece Dates 1914, Room 2, Shelf 1289, Box 71, *KNA*.
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65. See H.H. Horne to Provincial Commissioner, Kisumu, November 16, 1914, DC/KSM/1/36/75, *KNA*: "at the commencement of hostilities I reported to the Officer Commanding Troops that in my opinion it would be advisable to remove the Seventh Day Adventists from the Kisii District. My reasons were that, firstly, it was a Society enjoying a bad reputation: it has been pilloried in 'Truth' and was, I understand, ordered out of the country by the Government of Northern Rhodesia. Secondly, it possesses a chain of stations from Kisii into the German colony and, thirdly, a large number of the members are foreigners and in one case a member is married to a German lady, and I refuse to believe that the sympathies of some of these persons are not with the enemy, and, fourthly, their headquarters are in Hamburg [*sic*]."
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4. W.E.B. Du Bois to Chairman of Board, June 20, 1921, Box I, C158, *NAACP Papers–Library of Congress, Washington, DC*.
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11. P. Godfrey Okoth, *United States of America's Foreign Policy Toward Kenya, 1952–1969*, Nairobi: Gideon S. Were Press, 1992, 25.
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14. To S.L. Holmes of the Colonial Office from Buckingham Palace, November 20, 1928, CO323/1004/8, *NAUK*.
15. "Report by Mr. Eliot on the Question of the Negroes in the Southern States," March 3, 1899, FO8881/7148, *NAUK*.
16. Clipping, August 1913, Box 35, *Earnest Sevier Cox Papers, Duke University*.
17. *The Illustrated Star*, March 30, 1912, Box 35, *Earnest Sevier Cox Papers*.
18. Article by E.S. Cox, Circa 1914, Box 35, *Earnest Sevier Cox Papers*.
19. *New York American*, June 6, 1920.
20. W. Alphaeus Hunton, *Decision in Africa: Sources of Current Conflict*, London: John Calder, 1959, 20.
21. "Negro Schools in the Southern States," 1928, CO822/17/8, *NAUK*.
22. On the Jeanes School, see Pamphlet, 1908–1931; Annual Report, 1932; Annual Report, 1933; Box 15, *Dillard Family Papers, University of Virginia–Charlottesville*.
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24. "Registration in Kenya colony of the American Graduates Holding Degrees, Diplomas of the recognized Colleges," July 30, 1925, MOH/1/152, *KNA*. At the same site, see also "Jurisdiction over Europeans & Americans in Up Country Stations," March 23, 1904, AP/1/109.
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29. Huxley, *White Man's Country*, 250.
30. Michael Reynolds, *Hemingway: The 1930s*, New York: Norton, 1997, 156.
31. Negley Farson, *Last Chance in Africa*, New York: Harcourt Brace, 1950, 46, 47, 49, 50.
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40. See G.F. Watkins, Native Commissioner to Department of Native Affairs, April 17, 1923, DC/KSM/1/36/75, *KNA*.
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40. Roy Wilkins to Donald Harrington, Chair of ACOA, September 29, 1955, Box II, A356, *NAACP Papers–Library of Congress*.
41. Arthur Spingarn to Walter White, August 6, 1953, Box II, A356, *NAACP Papers–Library of Congress*.
42. W.A. Hunton to Henry Lee Moon, April 3, 1953, Box II, A373, *NAACP Papers–Library of Congress*.
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50. Wilson Flake, U.S. Embassy-Accra to C. Vaughan Ferguson, Bureau of African Affairs, December 9, 1958, Record Group 84, Records of the Foreign Service Posts of the Department of State, Classified General Records, Box 1, *NARA-CP.*
51. Gerald Horne, *Race Woman: The Lives of Shirley Graham Du Bois.*
52. *London Times*, December 11, 1958.
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56. Tom Mboya, "The Kenya Question: An African Answer," London: Fabian Colonial Bureau, 1956, *London Metropolitan University.*
57. Report by Trade Unions Congress, March 7, 1956, Box 36, *Marjorie Nicholson Papers.*
58. David Newman to Walter Reuther, February 4, 1956, Box 103, *Papers of UAW Washington Office, International Affairs, Victor Reuther and Lewis Carliner Papers-Wayne State University, Detroit*: hereafter referred to as *UAW Papers.*
59. Mary W. Francis, International Representative of Women's Department of UAW, to Tom Mboya, Box 18, Folder 5, *Tom Mboya Papers–Stanford University.*
60. Tom Mboya to Gwendolyn Young, April 17, 1957, Box 18, Folder 5, *Tom Mboya Papers.*
61. Maida Springer to New York Times, September 6, 1957, Box 18, Folder 5, *Tom Mboya Papers.*
62. Maida Springer-Kemp to New York Times, April 28, 1958, Box 18, Folder 5, *Tom Mboya Papers.*
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64. Statement by Mervyn Colet Manby, Senior Superintendent, Nairobi City Division, Police, August 10, 1957, Box 1, *Mervyn Colet Manby Papers–Oxford University.*
65. Report by Mervyn Colet Manby, August 12, 1957, Box 1, *Mervyn Colet Manby.*
66. David Newman to Victor Reuther, May 22, 1956, Box 103, *UAW Papers.*
67. *East African Standard*, April 17, 1958. See also Tom Mboya to John Hatch, April 18, 1958, *Papers of Labour Party, Kenya Correspondence–Manchester Labour History and Study Centre.*
68. *TIME*, June 23, 1958.
69. Maida Springer-Kemp to Tom Mboya, May 10, 1958, Box 18, Folder 5, *Tom Mboya Papers.*
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13. Working-Class Hero?

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12. Richard M. Nixon to Tom Mboya, August 22, 1960, Series 320, Folder: Mboya, Tom, *LN Collection*.
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14. A New Frontier—in Africa?

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